

STORY BY KYO SHIRODAIRA ART BY CHASHIBA KATASE

IN/SPECTRE

6



IN/SPECTRE

6

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CHAPTER 11: "THE UNSTOPPABLE AVENGER"



SHE HAD
OFFERED
TWO
SOLUTIONS.



BUT THEY
WEREN'T
ENOUGH...

... TO
ERASE THE
MONSTER
THAT IS
STEEL LADY
NANASE.

WHOOSH



WHAM

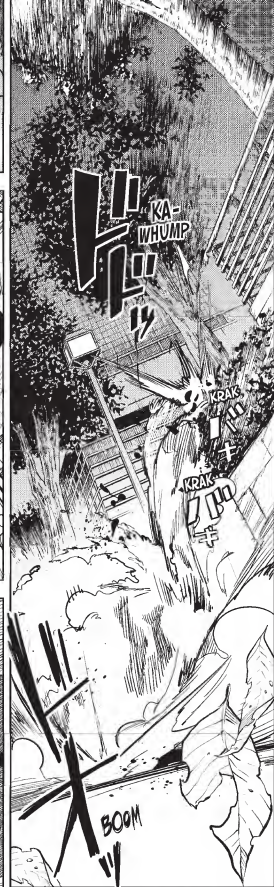




GWOH

CLANK

GNN
GNN
GN
h
h
h







"THIS HAS BEEN POINTED OUT MANY TIMES BEFORE, BUT KARIN NANASE DIDN'T TRY TO DODGE THE AVALANCHE OF STEEL BEAMS."

SHE LOOKED RIGHT AT THEM, AND LET THEM CRUSH HER."



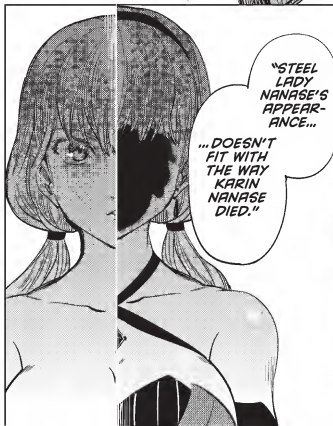
"...THE CIRCUMSTANCES OF HER PASSING CAN ONLY LEAD TO ONE CONCLUSION: THAT SHE HAD ACCEPTED HER DEATH."

"WHAT-EVER HER MENTAL STATE..."



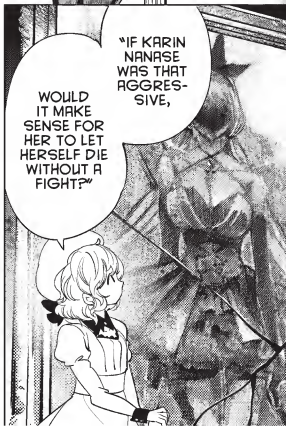
EVEN IF SHE WERE TO COME BACK AS A GHOST, WOULD THAT GHOST REALLY BE SO AGGRESSIVE AS TO EARN A NAME LIKE 'STEEL LADY NANASE'?"

"IN THAT CASE,



"STEEL LADY NANASE'S APPEARANCE..."

"...DOESN'T FIT WITH THE WAY KARIN NANASE DIED."



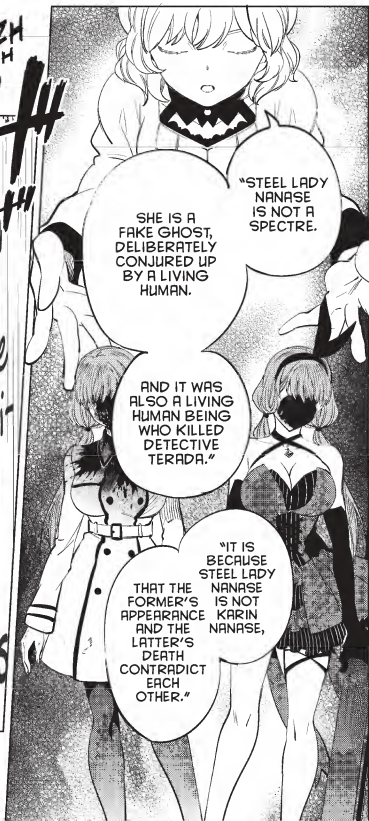
"IF KARIN NANASE WAS THAT AGGRESSIVE,

WOULD IT MAKE SENSE FOR HER TO LET HERSELF DIE WITHOUT A FIGHT?"



"I PRESENTED
A THEORY THAT
RECONCILED THE
TWO, BUT IT WAS
REJECTED."

KZH
ZH
Steel
Lady
Nanase
Investi-
gation
Head-
quarters
KRZH



SHE IS A
FAKE GHOST,
DELIBERATELY
CONJURED UP
BY A LIVING
HUMAN.

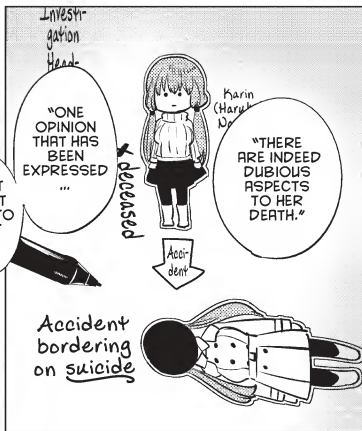
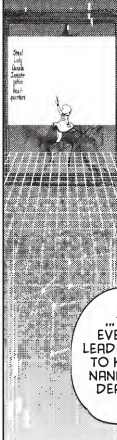
"STEEL LADY
NANASE
IS NOT A
SPECTRE."

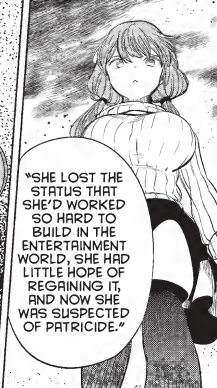
AND IT WAS
ALSO A LIVING
HUMAN BEING
WHO KILLED
DETECTIVE
TERADA."

"IT IS
BECAUSE
STEEL LADY
NANASE
IS NOT
KARIN
NANASE,
THAT THE
FORMER'S
APPEARANCE
AND THE
LATTER'S
DEATH
CONTRADICT
EACH
OTHER."

"SO
ALLOW
ME TO
FORMULATE
A NEW
THEORY."

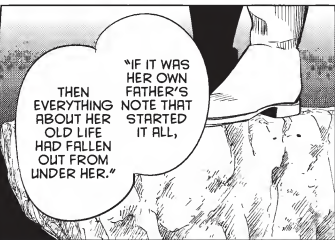






"SHE LOST THE STATUS THAT SHE'D WORKED SO HARD TO BUILD IN THE ENTERTAINMENT WORLD, SHE HAD LITTLE HOPE OF REGAINING IT, AND NOW SHE WAS SUSPECTED OF PATRICIDE."

"SHE HAD BEEN DRIVEN TO THE EDGE."



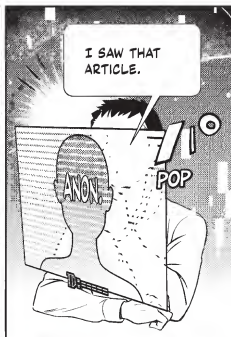
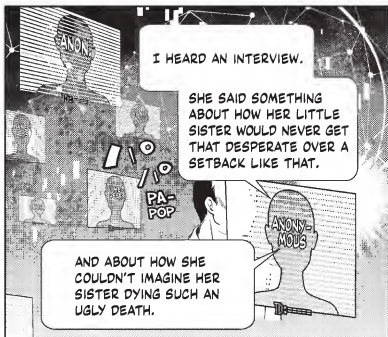
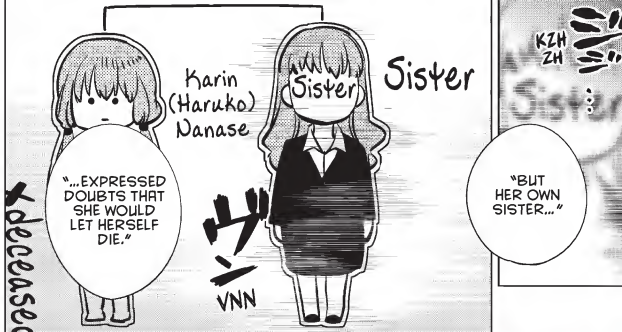
THEN EVERYTHING ABOUT HER OLD LIFE HAD FALLEN OUT FROM UNDER HER."

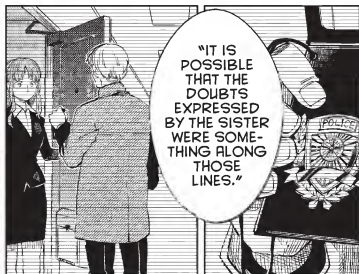
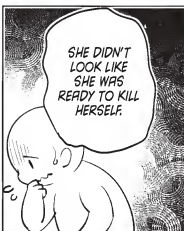
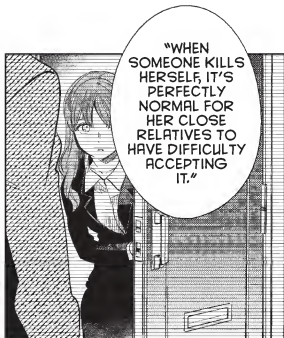
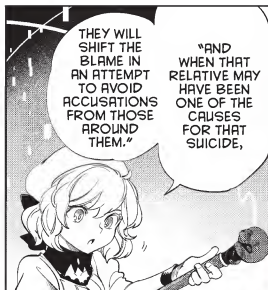
"IF IT WAS HER OWN FATHER'S NOTE THAT STARTED IT ALL,

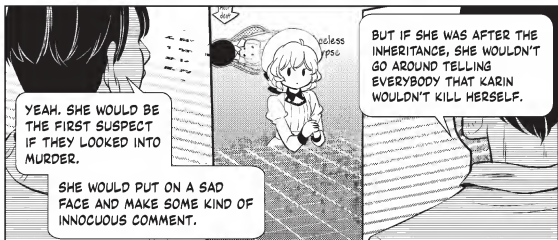


"THAT'S AMPLE MOTIVE FOR SUICIDE."



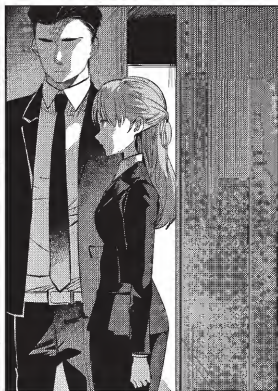








HATSUMI
HAD HER
DOUBTS
FROM
THE VERY
BEGIN-
NING.





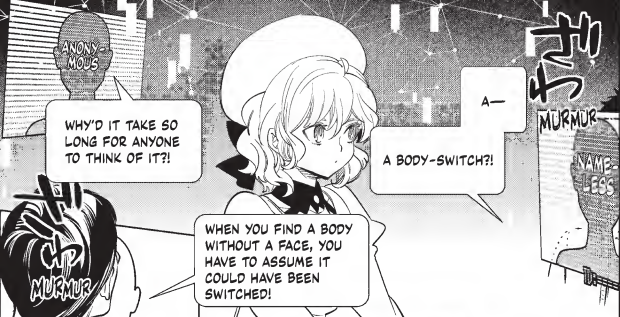
NÉE
HARUKO
NANASE,
REALLY
DEAD?"

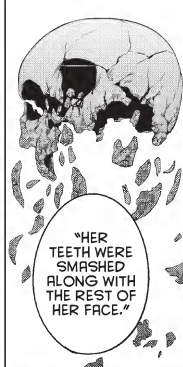
"WAS
KARIN
NANASE,



"ARE THEY
SURE IT
WASN'T
SOMEONE
ELSE WHOSE
FACE WAS
SMASHED IN
BY THOSE
GIRDERS?"

SUCH
WERE HER
THOUGHTS.





"HER
TEETH WERE
SMASHED
ALONG WITH
THE REST OF
HER FACE."



"THOSE
BELONGINGS
COULD EASILY
BE TRADED
FOR SOME
WITH SOMEONE
ELSE'S
PRINTS."



"AND IT'S
NOT LIKE THEY
MATCHED THE
PRINTS WITH
SOMETHING
ON POLICE
RECORDS.

THEY ONLY
CHECKED
THEM
AGAINST THE
LUGGAGE
AND
BELONGINGS
IN THE
HOTEL."



"AND
THERE ARE
PLENTY OF
PEOPLE
WHO SHARE
A BLOOD
TYPE."

"AS FOR
PHYSICAL
FEATURES,
IT'S NOT LIKE
SHE HAD ANY
SPECIAL
SURGICAL
SCARS OR
BIRTH-
MARKS."



"WE CAN'T
RULE OUT THE
POSSIBILITY
THAT SHE
HAD BEEN
REPLACED
BY SOMEONE
ELSE."



"IF THERE HAD BEEN A MAJOR DIFFERENCE IN BUST SIZE, IT WOULD BE OBVIOUS THAT IT WAS SOMEONE ELSE."

BUT WOULD POLICE REALLY TAKE EXACT MEASUREMENTS OF A DEAD BODY'S BREASTS?"



BUT THOSE BREASTS WERE A DEFINING FEATURE!

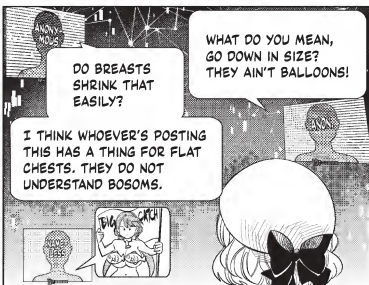
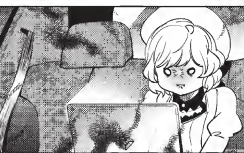
YEAH. THEY WERE HUGE.



"THERE ARE ANY NUMBER OF WAYS TO INTERPRET IT."

ALL THE STRESS FROM RUNNING FROM THE MEDIA COULD HAVE CAUSED THEM TO GO DOWN IN SIZE."

"EVEN IF THE BUST DOESN'T SEEM TO QUITE MATCH HER GRAVURE PHOTOS, PICTURES CAN BE DOCTORED."



DO BREASTS SHRINK THAT EASILY?

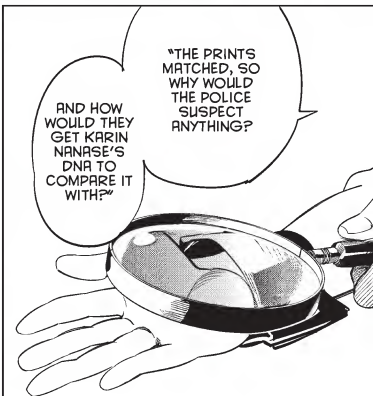
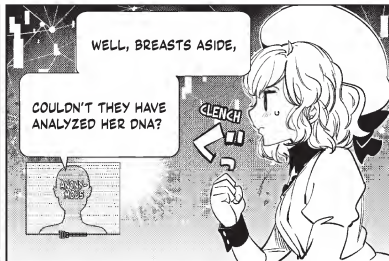
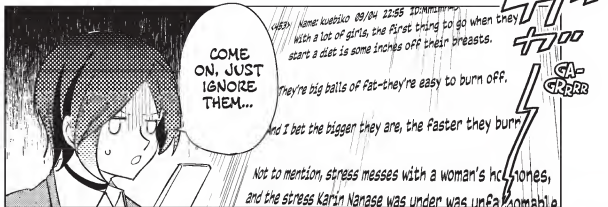
WHAT DO YOU MEAN, GO DOWN IN SIZE? THEY AIN'T BALLOONS!

I THINK WHOEVER'S POSTING THIS HAS A THING FOR FLAT CHESTS. THEY DO NOT UNDERSTAND BOSOMS.



TKKA TKKA TKKA

BAM!

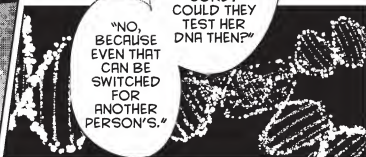




"IF IT WAS A MATCH, IT STILL WOULDN'T BE CONCLUSIVE EVIDENCE."



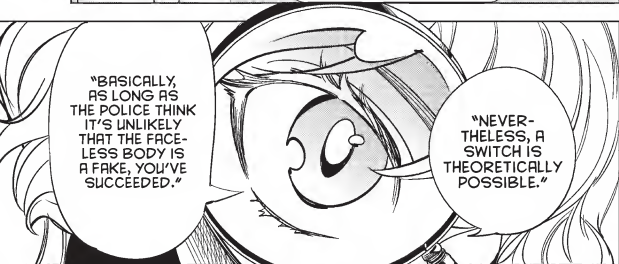
"WHAT IF THE FAMILY STILL HAD KARIN NANASE'S UMBILICAL CORD? COULD THEY TEST HER DNA THEN?"



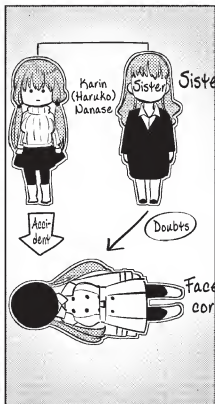
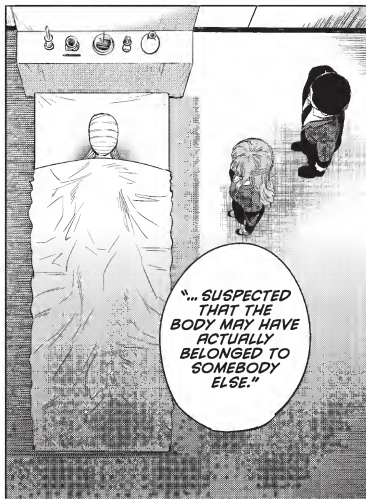
"NO, BECAUSE EVEN THAT CAN BE SWITCHED FOR ANOTHER PERSON'S."

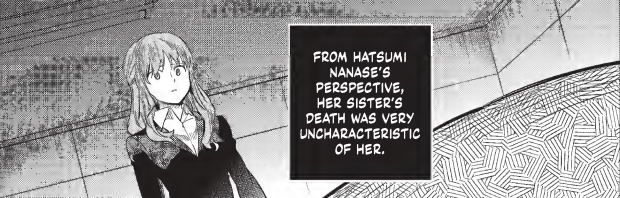


...YEAH, BUT THAT WOULD TAKE A LOT OF EFFORT.



BUT REALISTICALLY, IT'S NOT POSSIBLE FOR THERE TO HAVE BEEN A SWITCH, RIGHT?

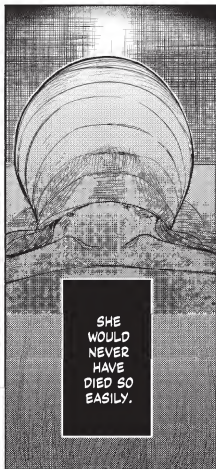




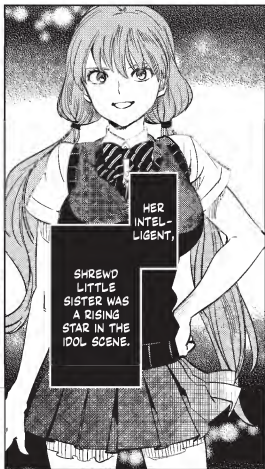
FROM HATSUMI
NANASE'S
PERSPECTIVE,
HER SISTER'S
DEATH WAS VERY
UNCHARACTERISTIC
OF HER.



IT ONLY
MAKES
SENSE
THAT
HATSUMI
WOULD
THINK
THIS
WAY.

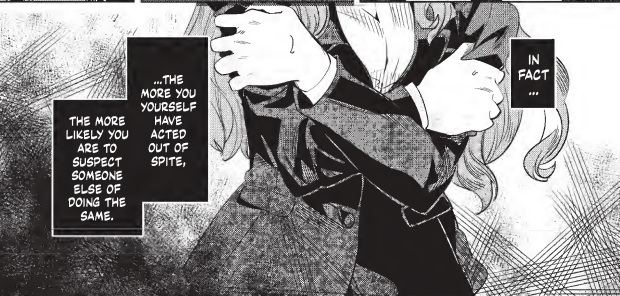


SHE
WOULD
NEVER
HAVE
DIED SO
EASILY.



HER
INTEL-
LIGENT,

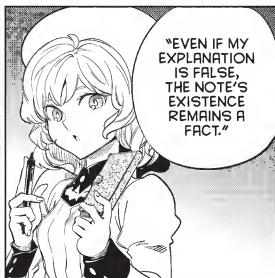
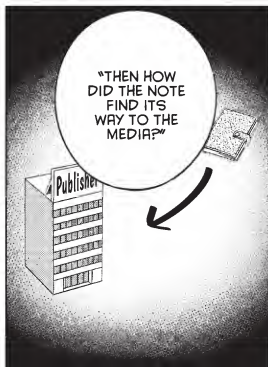
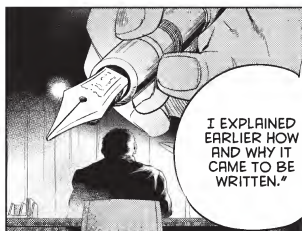
SHREWD
LITTLE
SISTER WAS
A RISING
STAR IN THE
IDOL SCENE.



THE MORE
LIKELY YOU
ARE TO
SUSPECT
SOMEONE
ELSE OF
DOING THE
SAME.

...THE
MORE YOU
YOURSELF
HAVE
ACTED
OUT OF
SPITE,

IN
FACT
...



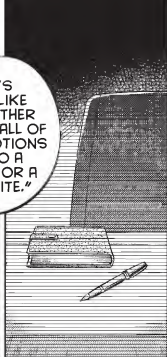
"SO HOW DID IT SO CONVENIENTLY MAKE ITS WAY TO THE PUBLIC?"



"HE WROTE IT BY HAND IN A PERSONAL DIARY."



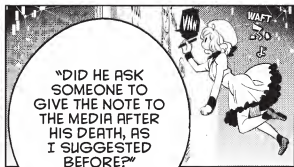
"IT'S NOT LIKE THE FATHER WROTE ALL OF HIS EMOTIONS ONTO A BLOG OR A WEBSITE."



"OR DID SOMEONE FIND THE NOTE AND SELL IT TO THE PRESS?"



"DID HE ASK SOMEONE TO GIVE THE NOTE TO THE MEDIA AFTER HIS DEATH, AS I SUGGESTED BEFORE?"



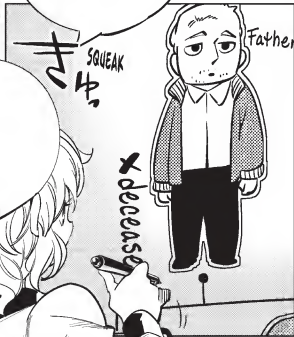
"EITHER WAY, THIS DEPENDED ON THERE BEING A 'SOME-ONE.'"



SQUEAK

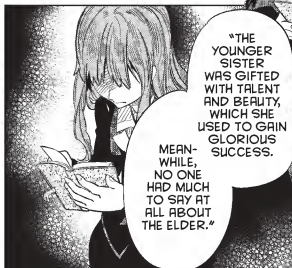
deceased

Father





"DID
HATSUMI
THINK FONDLY
OF HER
SISTER?"



"THE
YOUNGER
SISTER
WAS GIFTED
WITH TALENT
AND BEAUTY,
WHICH SHE
USED TO GAIN
GLORIOUS
SUCCESS.

MEAN-
WHILE,
NO ONE
HAD MUCH
TO SAY AT
ALL ABOUT
THE ELDER."



"SOMEONE
GAVE IT TO
THE MEDIA."

Father

Note

"AND
THAT
SOME-
ONE..."

COULD
ONLY
HAVE
BEEN
KARIN
NANASE'S
SISTER."

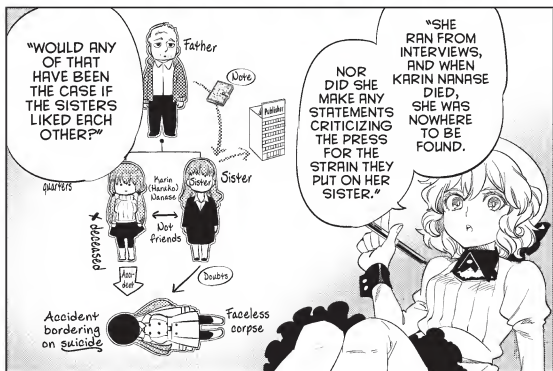
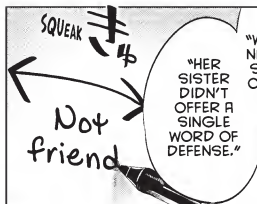
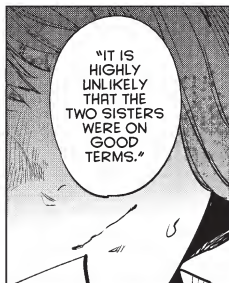
Sister

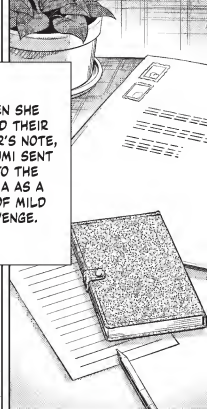
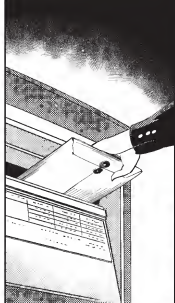
Sister

"AND THE
TWO WERE
CONSTANTLY
COMPARED,
WITH THE ELDER
SISTER ALWAYS
DEEMED
INFERIOR."

"IT MAY
BE THAT THE
SCOUTS
ONLY WANTED
THE YOUNGER
SISTER..."

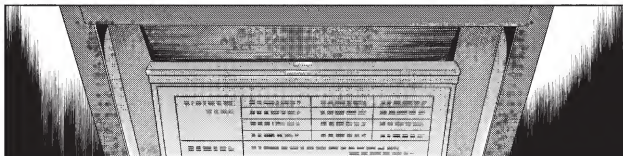
I feel like Hawk.
By the time you read this, I will be
I have no doubt that she will have murdered me.
There's no doubt.



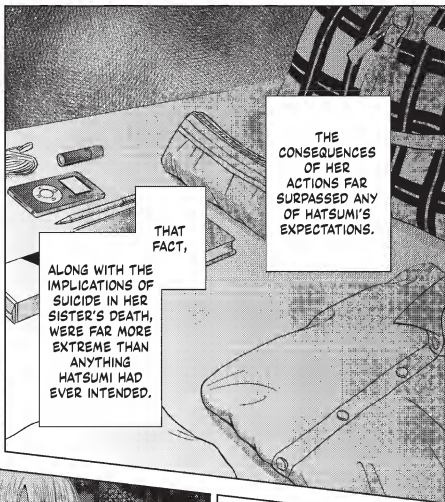
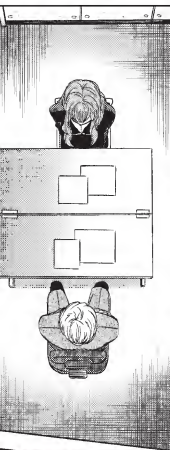


WHEN SHE
FOUND THEIR
FATHER'S NOTE,
HATSUMI SENT
IT TO THE
MEDIA AS A
BIT OF MILD
REVENGE.

SHE DID
IT OUT
OF SPIE
TOWARD HER
SUPERIOR
LITTLE
SISTER AS
WELL AS
JEALOUSY
OVER HER
SUCCESS.



HARUKO
IS DEAD?

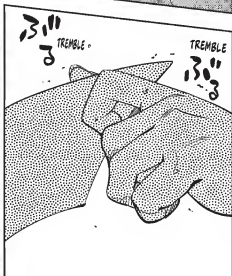


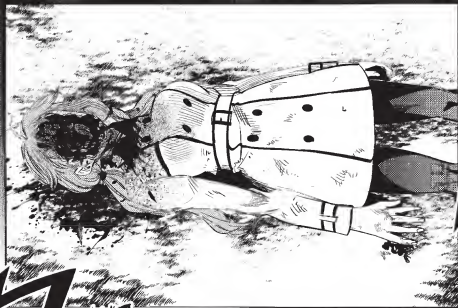
THE
CONSEQUENCES
OF HER
ACTIONS FAR
SURPASSED ANY
OF HATSUMI'S
EXPECTATIONS.

THAT
FACT,

ALONG WITH THE
IMPLICATIONS OF
SUICIDE IN HER
SISTER'S DEATH,
WERE FAR MORE
EXTREME THAN
ANYTHING
HATSUMI HAD
EVER INTENDED.

...IT CAN'T
BE TRUE.





BA-



DUMP



GASP

"SOME-
BODY"...?



CLATTER

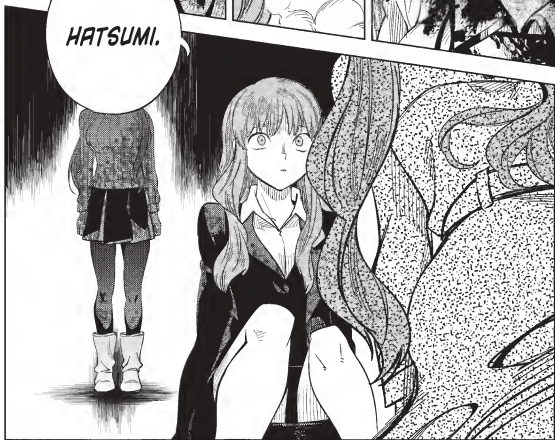
HARUKO
WOULDN'T
DIE THAT
EASILY!

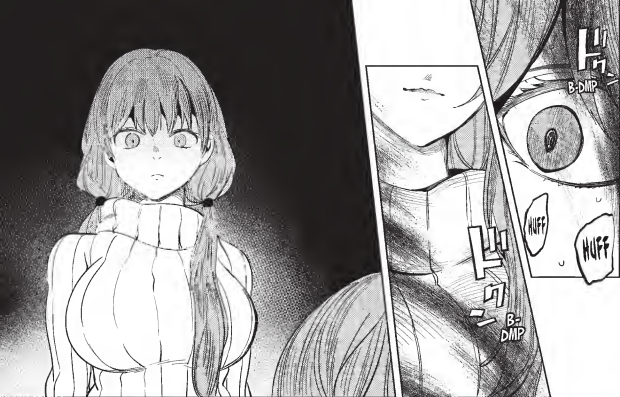
ARE
YOU SURE
THERE'S
NO CHANCE
SOMEBODY
KILLED
HER?!



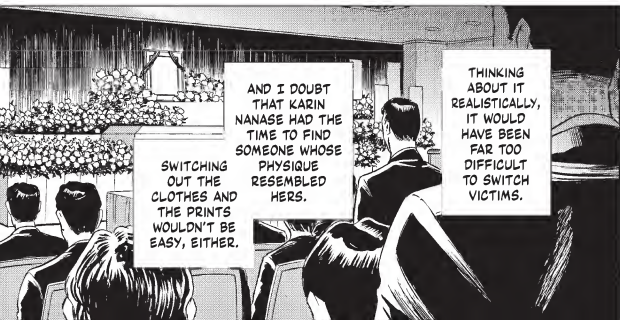


HATSUMI.





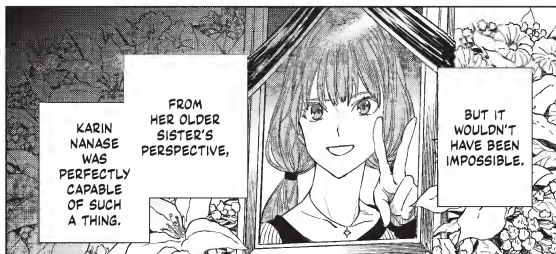
HATSUMI
SUSPECTED
THAT KARIN
HAD FAKED HER
OWN DEATH,
TO TAKE HER
REVENGE.



AND I DOUBT
THAT KARIN
NANASE HAD THE
TIME TO FIND
SOMEONE WHOSE
PHYSIQUE
RESEMBLED
HERS.

SWITCHING
OUT THE
CLOTHES AND
THE PRINTS
WOULDN'T BE
EASY, EITHER.

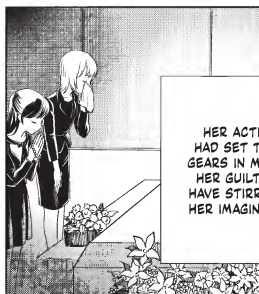
THINKING
ABOUT IT
REALISTICALLY,
IT WOULD
HAVE BEEN
FAR TOO
DIFFICULT
TO SWITCH
VICTIMS.



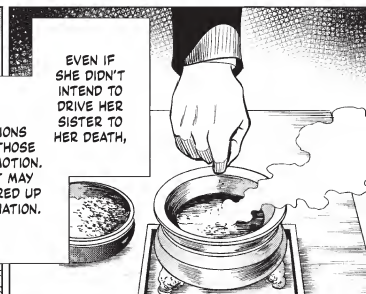
KARIN
NANASE
WAS
PERFECTLY
CAPABLE
OF SUCH
A THING.

FROM
HER OLDER
SISTER'S
PERSPECTIVE,

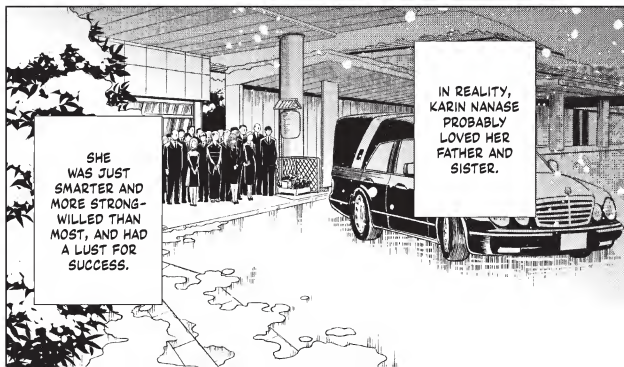
BUT IT
WOULDN'T
HAVE BEEN
IMPOSSIBLE.



HER ACTIONS
HAD SET THOSE
GEARS IN MOTION.
HER GUILT MAY
HAVE STIRRED UP
HER IMAGINATION.



EVEN IF
SHE DIDN'T
INTEND TO
DRIVE HER
SISTER TO
HER DEATH,



SHE
WAS JUST
SMARTER AND
MORE STRONG-
WILLED THAN
MOST, AND HAD
A LUST FOR
SUCCESS.

IN REALITY,
KARIN NANASE
PROBABLY
LOVED HER
FATHER AND
SISTER.



SHE
WOULD
SURMOUNT
ALL
DIFFICULTIES
TO AVENGE
HERSELF.

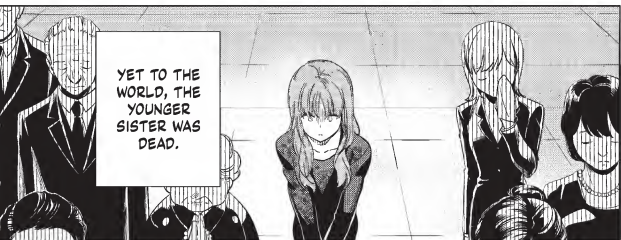
IT WAS EASY
FOR HATSUMI
TO IMAGINE
THAT IF
KARIN KNEW
WHO HAD
BEEN HER
UNDOING,

BUT IN HER
SISTER'S EYES,
SHE WASN'T
SUCH AN
ADMIRABLE
HUMAN
BEING.



SHE'S
GOING TO
KILL ME,
JUST LIKE
SHE DID
HER.

AND IF
I KNOW
HARUKO,
IT WOULD
BE THE
PERFECT
CRIME.



YET TO THE
WORLD, THE
YOUNGER
SISTER WAS
DEAD.

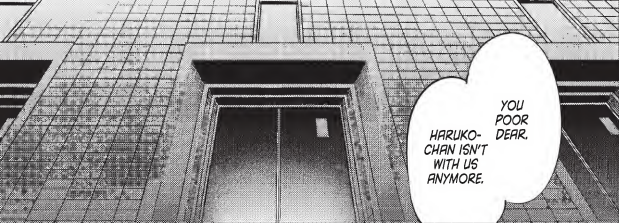


RUMBLE

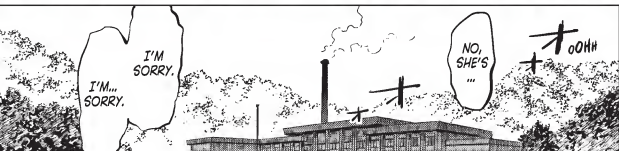
コ
オ

ジ
RUMBLE
ジ





YOU
POOR
DEAR.
HARUKO-
CHAN ISN'T
WITH US
ANYMORE.



I'M
SORRY.
I'M...
SORRY.

NO,
SHE'S
...

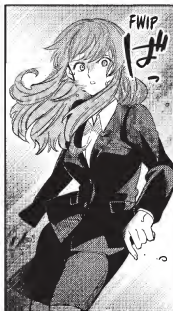
OOHH



NO ONE
WOULD BE
ON THE
LOOKOUT
FOR A DEAD
WOMAN.
SHE WOULD
BE AN
UNSTOPPABLE
AVENGER.



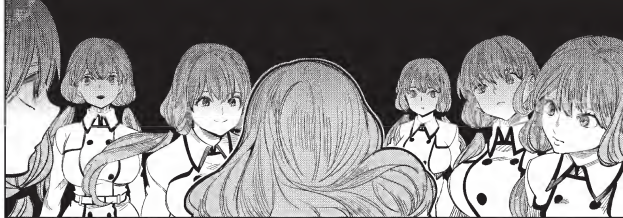
HEE
HEE



FWIP
FWIP



HATSUMI
WAS
AFRAID.



HAUNTED
BY THE
SHADOW
OF HER
SISTER,
WHO WAS
INDEED
DEAD,

HER
DAILY
LIFE
BEGAN
TO
SUFFER.

AAAAAAHH

AH...



SQUEAK
Steel
Lady
Nana

"THE LIE
OF STEEL
LADY
NANASE."



...?



"WHAT
SHE
NEEDED
WAS A
LIE."

SQUEAK
きゅ
きゅ
SQUEAK

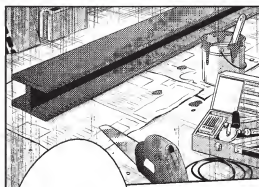
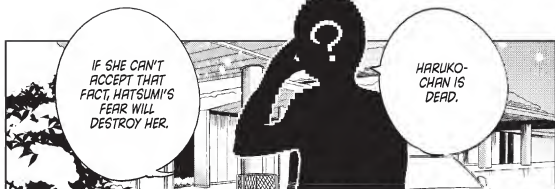


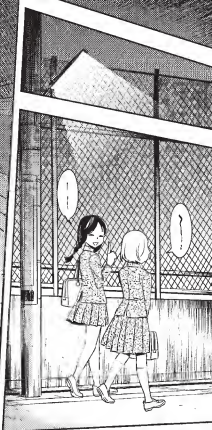
"IT DIDN'T
MATTER
THAT KARIN
NANASE
WAS DEAD.

ALL
OF THE
EVIDENCE
COULD BE
COUNTER-
FEIT."

"CONVINCED
THAT A DEAD
WOMAN
STILL LIVED,

THERE
WAS LITTLE
HATSUMI
COULD DO TO
ASSUAGE THE
CONSTANT
FEAR OF HER
SISTER'S
REVENGE."



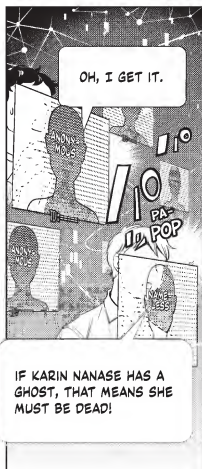




THIS PERSON
DONNED THE
GUISE OF
STEEL LADY
NANASE AND
ATTACKED
PEOPLE
NIGHT
AFTER
NIGHT,

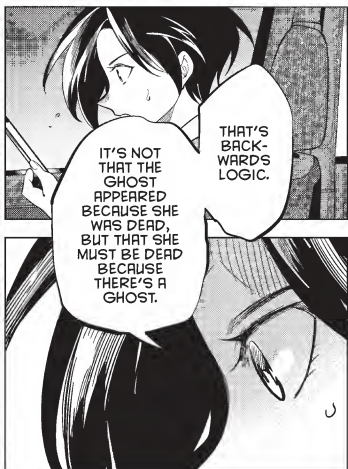
ALL
TO GET
PEOPLE
TALKING
ABOUT A
MADE-UP
GHOST.

WHEN...!



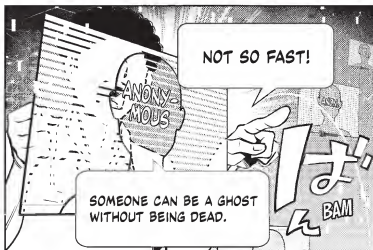
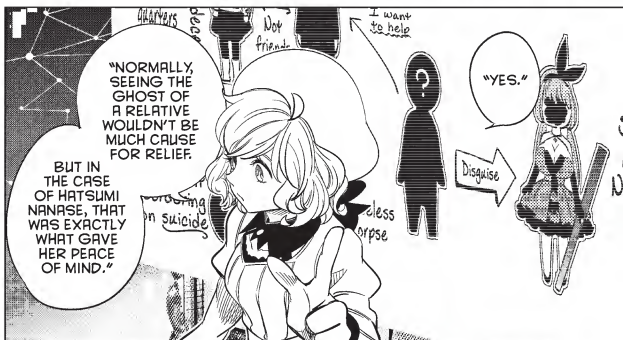
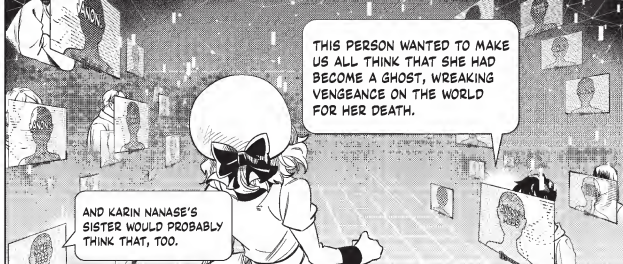
OH, I GET IT.

IF KARIN NANASE HAS A
GHOST, THAT MEANS SHE
MUST BE DEAD!



IT'S NOT
THAT THE
GHOST
APPEARED
BECAUSE SHE
WAS DEAD,
BUT THAT SHE
MUST BE DEAD
BECAUSE
THERE'S A
GHOST.

THAT'S
BACK-
WARDS
LOGIC.





Urban Legends

▶ Have you heard of Steel Lady Nanase?

▶ Re: Steel Lady Na

"ATTACKING PEOPLE AT RANDOM SPED THE PROCESS UP EVEN FURTHER."

"FURTHER-MORE, THIS VERY MEMORABLE NAME AND VISAGE..."

"...ALSO GOT PEOPLE TALKING, AND SPREAD THE RUMORS THAT MUCH MORE QUICKLY."

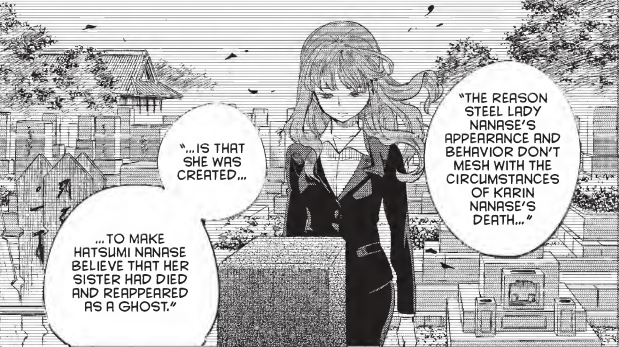
"FOR THE OPTIMAL EFFECT, OUR 'GHOST' WOULD HAVE WANTED HATSUMI TO COME ACROSS THE RUMORS ON HER OWN."

OR HAPPEN TO OVERHEAR SOMEONE MENTION IT IN TOWN."

"...SHE NEEDED TO FIND THE RUMOR IN A GOSSIP COLUMN ON THE INTERNET,

"INSTEAD OF HAVING A FRIEND OR ACQUAINTANCE SPECIFICALLY BRING IT UP..."

"THAT WAY, THE STORY WOULD SEEM LESS CONTRIVED."

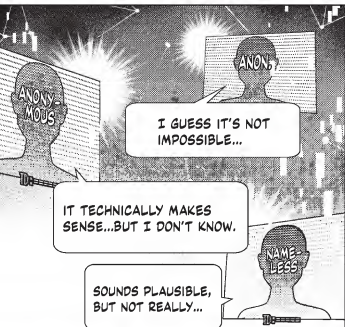


"...IS THAT
SHE WAS
CREATED..."

"...TO MAKE
HATSUMI NANASE
BELIEVE THAT HER
SISTER HAD DIED
AND REAPPEARED
AS A GHOST."

"THE REASON
STEEL LADY
NANASE'S
APPEARANCE AND
BEHAVIOR DON'T
MESH WITH THE
CIRCUMSTANCES
OF KARIN
NANASE'S
DEATH..."

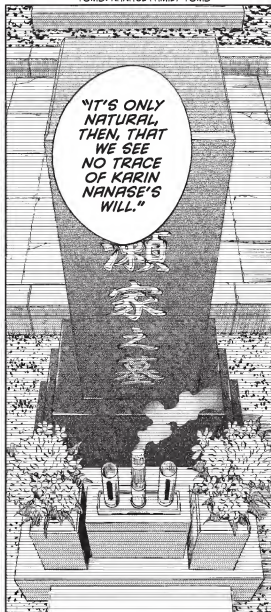
TOMB: NANASE FAMILY TOMB



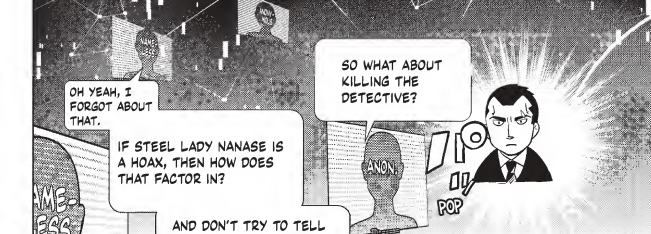
I GUESS IT'S NOT
IMPOSSIBLE...

IT TECHNICALLY MAKES
SENSE...BUT I DON'T KNOW.

SOUNDS PLAUSIBLE,
BUT NOT REALLY...



"IT'S ONLY
NATURAL,
THEN, THAT
WE SEE
NO TRACE
OF KARIN
NANASE'S
WILL."



OH YEAH, I
FORGOT ABOUT
THAT.

IF STEEL LADY NANASE IS
A HOAX, THEN HOW DOES
THAT FACTOR IN?

SO WHAT ABOUT
KILLING THE
DETECTIVE?

AND DON'T TRY TO TELL
US STEEL LADY NANASE
AND THE COP KILLER ARE
UNRELATED.



"OF
COURSE
THEY'RE
RELATED."



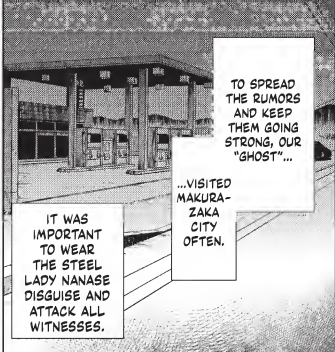
"DETECTIVE
TERADA'S
KILLER IS THE
VERY PERSON
WHO CREATED
STEEL LADY
NANASE."



WHO
ARE
YOU?

WHAT ARE
YOU DOING
DRESSED
LIKE THAT?

...WHEN,
UNFORTU-
NATELY,
DETECTIVE
TERADA
ARRIVED ON
THE SCENE.



TO SPREAD
THE RUMORS
AND KEEP
THEM GOING
STRONG, OUR
"GHOST"...

...VISITED
MAKURA-
ZAKA
CITY OFTEN.

IT WAS
IMPORTANT
TO WEAR
THE STEEL
LADY NANASE
DISGUISE AND
ATTACK ALL
WITNESSES.



WHICH IS
EXACTLY
WHAT THE
CULPRIT
WAS DOING
LAST
NIGHT...

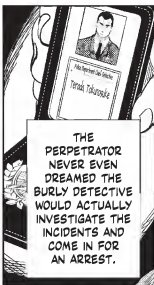




MOST PEOPLE
WOULD RUN WHEN
CONFRONTED BY
SOMEONE IN THAT
GETUP IN
THE MIDDLE OF
THE NIGHT.



WHY DON'T
YOU COME
WITH ME
TO THE
STATION?



THE
PERPETRATOR
NEVER EVEN
DREAMED THE
BURLY DETECTIVE
WOULD ACTUALLY
INVESTIGATE THE
INCIDENTS AND
COME IN FOR
AN ARREST.



THE
"GHOST"
WAS
CAUGHT
ALL TOO
EASILY.





WHEN YOU
EXPECT SOMEONE
TO RUN AWAY,
BUT THEY RUN
TOWARD YOU IN-
STEAD, IT WOULD
CONFUSE YOU.
ANYONE WOULD
FREEZE UP FOR
A SECOND.

AND WHEN
THE CULPRIT
FINALLY THOUGHT
TO RUN AWAY, IT
WAS TOO LATE.
THE DETECTIVE
HAD HIS SPOOK
BY THE ARM.

BUT
THEN,
IT WAS
DETECTIVE
TERADA'S
TURN TO
FREEZE.





HERE
IS A
"GHOST",
WEARING
A

AND A WOMAN'S
BIG WIG,
RIBBON
ON HER
HAIR...

...HER
FACE
PAINTED
BLACK TO
MIMIC THE
CORPSE'S
LACK OF
FEATURES
...

BECAUSE
WHEN HE
LOOKED
CLOSELY
AT THE
OFFENDER,
HE SAW
IT WAS A
MAN.



FWOOSH



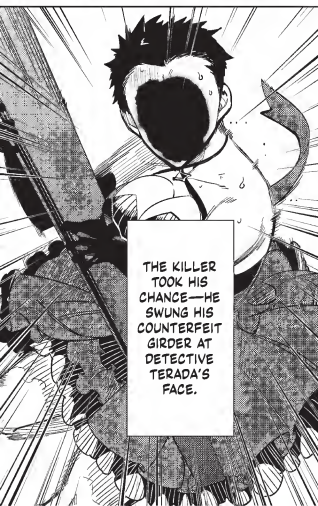
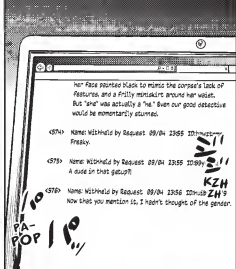
...AND A
FRILLY
MINISKIRT
AROUND
HER WAIST.
BUT "SHE"
WAS
ACTUALLY
A "HE."
EVEN
OUR
GOOD
DETECTIVE
WOULD BE
MOMEN-
TARILY
STUNNED.





SO IT'S MORE CONVINCING TO MAKE HIM A MAN MOTIVATED BY ROMANTIC FEELINGS FOR HER, OR SOMETHING SIMILAR... IS THAT IT?

THE PERPETRATOR DID IT ALL FOR KARIN NANASE'S SISTER.

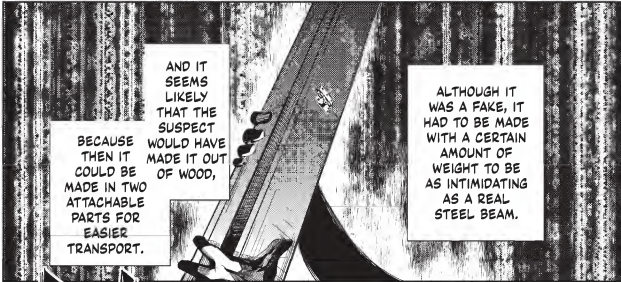


THE KILLER TOOK HIS CHANCE—HE SWUNG HIS COUNTERFEIT GIRDER AT DETECTIVE TERADA'S FACE.



DRESSING UP AS A GHOST AND SWINGING AN IRON GIRDER AROUND EVERY NIGHT FOR THE SAKE OF SOMEONE ELSE.

NO ONE WOULD BELIEVE THAT A WOMAN WOULD DO SOMETHING SO STUPID,



BECAUSE
THEN IT
COULD BE
MADE IN TWO
ATTACHABLE
PARTS FOR
EASIER
TRANSPORT.

AND IT
SEEMS
LIKELY
THAT THE
SUSPECT
WOULD HAVE
MADE IT OUT
OF WOOD,

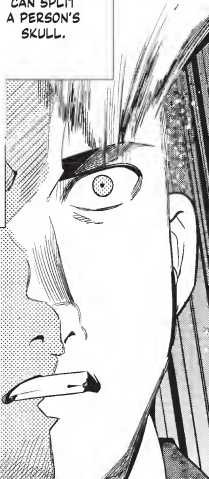
ALTHOUGH IT
WAS A FAKE, IT
HAD TO BE MADE
WITH A CERTAIN
AMOUNT OF
WEIGHT TO BE
AS INTIMIDATING
AS A REAL
STEEL BEAM.

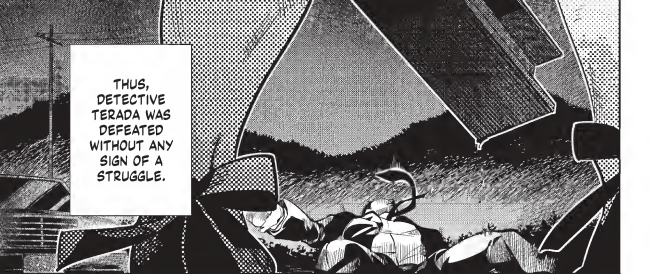


AND THE
PERP'S ONE
HIT WAS
RIGHT ON
THE MONEY.

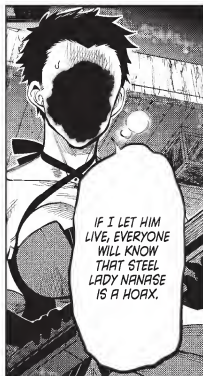
DEPENDING
ON WHERE
IT MAKES
CONTACT,
IT COULD
RENDER A
PERSON UN-
CONSCIOUS,
OR EVEN
KILL THEM
IN ONE BLOW.

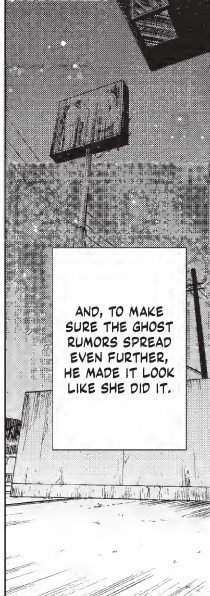
IF IT'S HEAVY
ENOUGH AND
LONG ENOUGH,
EVEN WOOD
CAN SPLIT
A PERSON'S
SKULL.



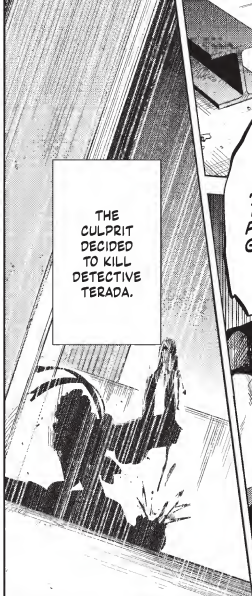


THUS,
DETECTIVE
TERADA WAS
DEFEATED
WITHOUT ANY
SIGN OF A
STRUGGLE.





AND, TO MAKE
SURE THE GHOST
RUMORS SPREAD
EVEN FURTHER,
HE MADE IT LOOK
LIKE SHE DID IT.



THE
CULPRIT
DECIDED
TO KILL
DETECTIVE
TERADA.



...HAS
TO BE
A REAL
GHOST.



WHEN HIS
WORK WAS
FINISHED,
THE KILLER
ERASED ALL
SIGNS HE
HAD BEEN
THERE AND
LEFT THE
SCENE.





I'M TIRED OF THIS.

IT'S JUST A BUNCH OF FORCED LOGIC!

NO, KEEP GOING.

WHAT HAPPENED NEXT?



WE DON'T KNOW HIS NAME, BUT WE'VE NARROWED DOWN THE CRITERIA."

"THEN, WHO IS THE KILLER?"



"AND A MAN."



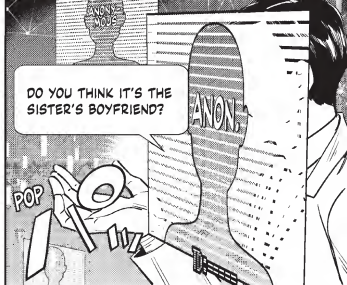
"IT WAS SOMEONE CLOSE TO KARIN NANASE'S SISTER."

SOMEONE WHO HAD ROMANTIC FEELINGS FOR HER, OR PERHAPS A NEED TO PROTECT HER.

SOMEONE WHO COULD WANDER AROUND AN UNFAMILIAR CITY, LATE AT NIGHT, DISGUISED AS STEEL LADY NANASE."



"THE
ODDS OF
THAT ARE
SLIM."



DO YOU THINK IT'S THE
SISTER'S BOYFRIEND?



"AND IF
HATSUMI IS
AFRAID HER
SISTER'S OUT TO
GET HER, NIGHT
IS EXACTLY WHEN
SHE WOULD BEG
HIM TO STAY
WITH HER."

"IF HER
LOVER IS
DOING
STRANGE
THINGS IN THE
MIDDLE OF THE
NIGHT, DON'T
YOU THINK
SHE WOULD
NOTICE?"

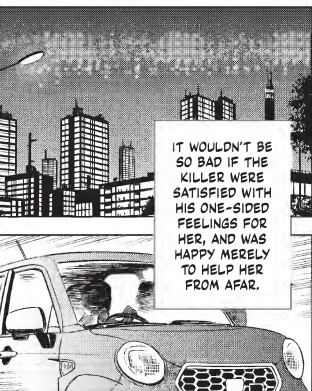


"IN WHICH
CASE, KARIN
NANASE'S
SISTER
MAY BE IN
DANGER."



"ERGO,
WE SHOULD
ASSUME THE
KILLER IS
SOMEONE
WITH FREE
TIME, WHO
WOULD STOP
AT NOTHING
TO HELP
HER."

SOMEONE
WITH
SOMEWHAT
DEVIANT
TENDENCIES,
AND SOME-
ONE WHO IS
SINGLE."



IT WOULDN'T BE
SO BAD IF THE
KILLER WERE
SATISFIED WITH
HIS ONE-SIDED
FEELINGS FOR
HER, AND WAS
HAPPY MERELY
TO HELP HER
FROM AFAR.

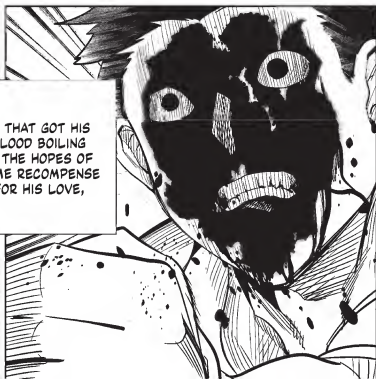


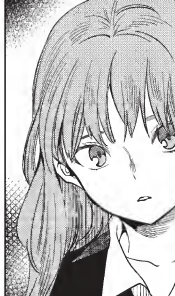
BUT NOW
HE'S
KILLED
A MAN.



HE MAY TRY
FORCING
HATSUMI
NANASE
INTO A
RELATIONSHIP.

IF THAT GOT HIS
BLOOD BOILING
IN THE HOPES OF
SOME RECOMPENSE
FOR HIS LOVE,





IF IT DOESN'T
STOP THERE,
HE MAY END
UP DOING HARM
TO HATSUMI
NANASE
HERSELF.

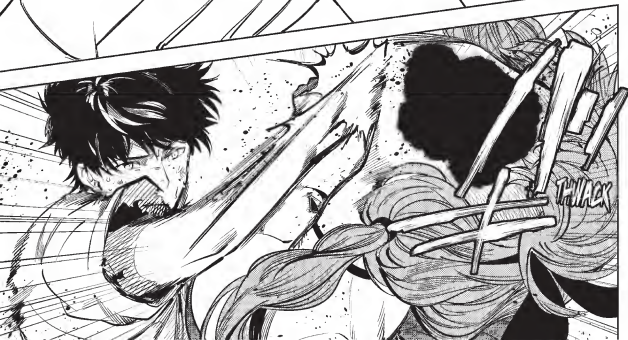
AND
THIS LED
TO HIM
MURDERING
DETECTIVE
TERADA.

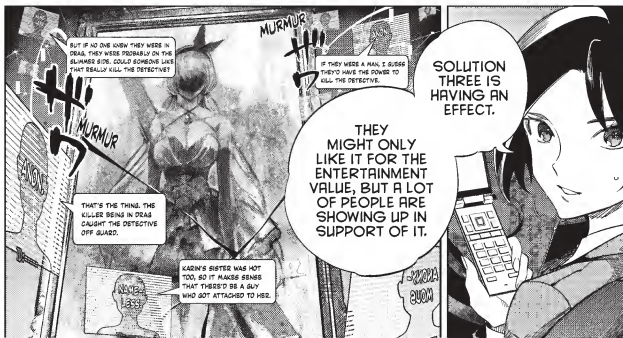


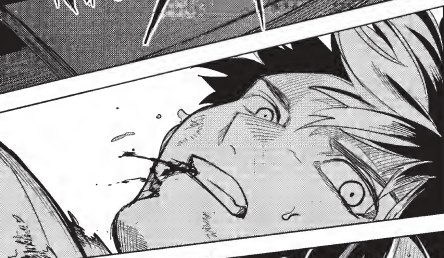
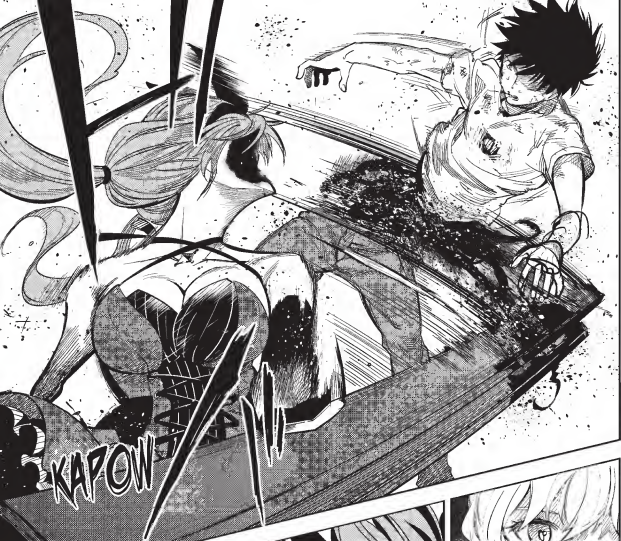
...ALL
FOR THE
SAKE OF
KARIN
NANASE'S
SISTER.

THE
KILLER
INVENTED
STEEL
LADY
NANASE,
A GHOST
THAT
DOESN'T
EXIST...

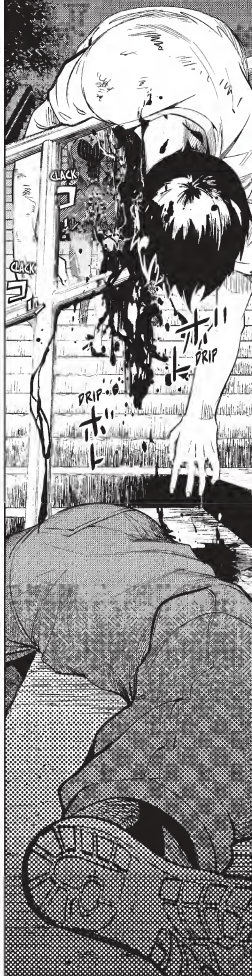
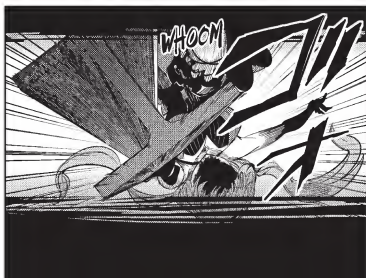
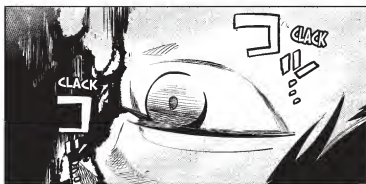
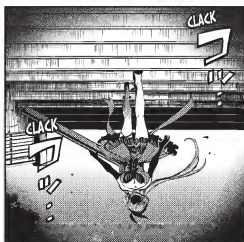


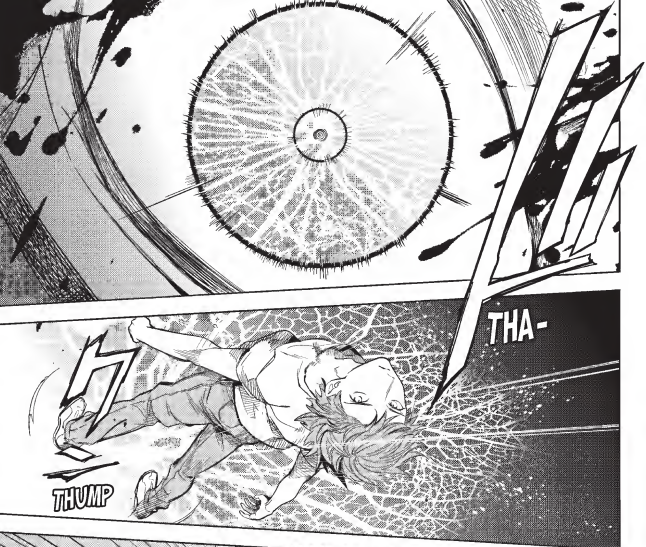




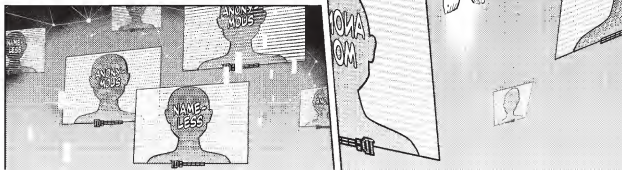
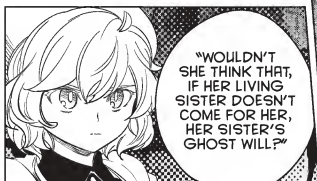
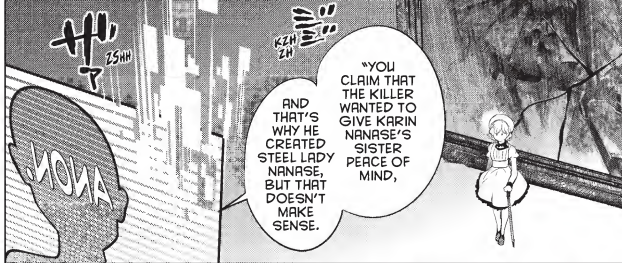


AND YET,
STEEL LADY
NANASE
DOESN'T
SEEM TO HAVE
WEAKENED.





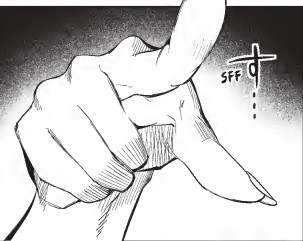
632> Name: Withheld by Request 09/05 00:09
Your solution has a fatal flaw.





"FURTHER-
MORE, IF THE
GHOST HAS
KILLED A MAN,
HER FEAR
WOULD BE
ASTRONO-
MICAL.

HATSUMI
WOULD BE
THAT MUCH
CLOSER TO
A MENTAL
BREAK-
DOWN."



SFF



COME
ON, CAN'T
YOU JUST
IGNORE
THAT
DETAIL?!

BUT



OH.

GOOD
POINT.

GASP



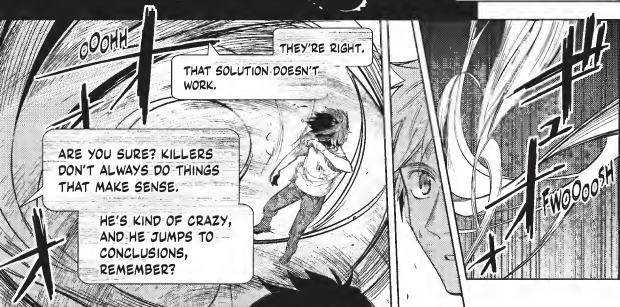
"ERGO,
YOU HAVE
FAILED TO
ESTABLISH
THE KILLER'S
MOTIVE."



"IF HIS
MOTIVE
DOESN'T
HOLD UP,

THEN
CONSE-
QUENTLY,
YOUR
ENTIRE
SOLUTION
FALLS
APART."

KZH
ZH



SNAP!

ANON.

ZSH

THEY'RE RIGHT.

THAT SOLUTION DOESN'T WORK.

ARE YOU SURE? KILLERS DON'T ALWAYS DO THINGS THAT MAKE SENSE.

HE'S KIND OF CRAZY, AND HE JUMPS TO CONCLUSIONS, REMEMBER?

FWOOOOSH

OOHH

THAT'S POSSIBLE, BUT IF WE GO BY THOSE RULES, THEN ANYTHING'S POSSIBLE.

I MEAN, IF THE MURDERER IS THAT IRRATIONAL, THERE'S NO WAY TO DEDUCE ANYTHING.

MAYBE HE JUST THOUGHT ALL HE NEEDED WAS A GHOST AND DIDN'T REALIZE THE ONE HE MADE UP WOULD BACKFIRE.



IN/SPECTRE

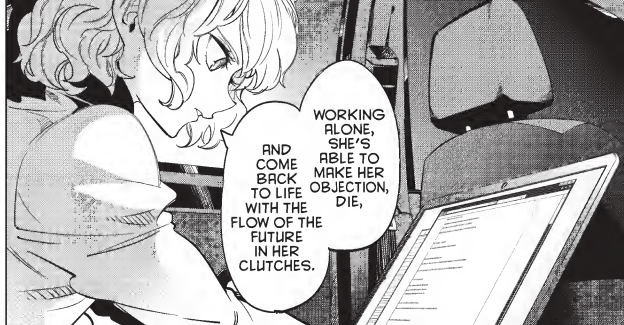


Sensei dies once so
he can tie his shoe.



RIKKA-
SAN'S
GOOD.

<1001> Name: Withheld by Request 00:13 ID:Over 1000
This thread has surpassed 1000 posts. KZH
Please go to a new thread. ZH



AND
COME
BACK
TO LIFE
WITH THE
FLOW OF THE
FUTURE
IN HER
CLUTCHES.

WORKING
ALONE,
SHE'S
ABLE TO
MAKE HER
OBJECTION,
DIE,



BUT *WE*
ARE NOT
ALONE.



KURÔ-
SENPAI
AND I...



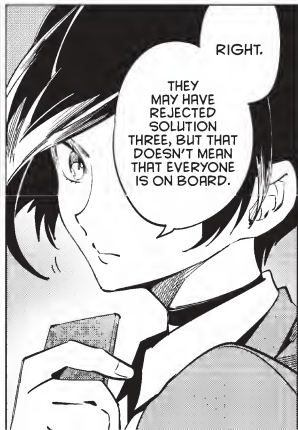
...ARE
GOING
TO STOP
YOU.



I'M NOT
GOING
TO DEPEND
ON A SMALL
PERCENTAGE
OF
DISSENTERS.

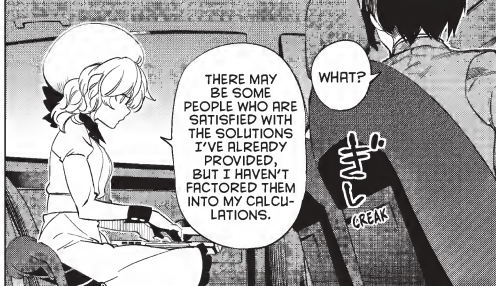


SURELY SOME
PERCENTAGE
OF THEM HAVE
STOPPED
BELIEVING IN
STEEL LADY
NANASE.



RIGHT.

THEY
MAY HAVE
REJECTED
SOLUTION
THREE, BUT THAT
DOESN'T MEAN
THAT EVERYONE
IS ON BOARD.

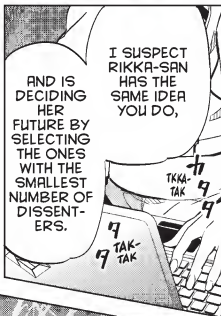


THERE MAY BE SOME PEOPLE WHO ARE SATISFIED WITH THE SOLUTIONS I'VE ALREADY PROVIDED, BUT I HAVEN'T FACTORED THEM INTO MY CALCULATIONS.

WHAT?



SHE ASSUMES THAT I'M TRYING TO WHITTLE AWAY AT HER INFLUENCE IN STAGES.



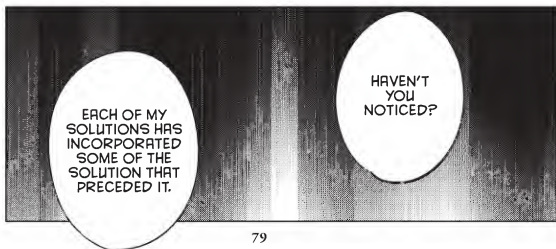
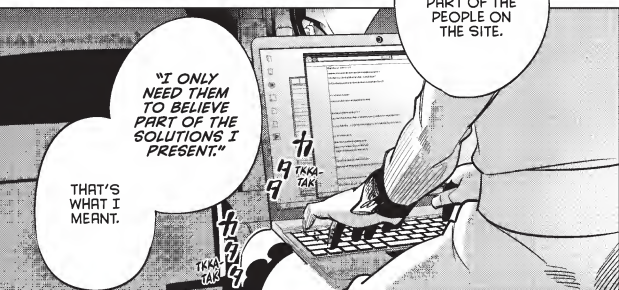
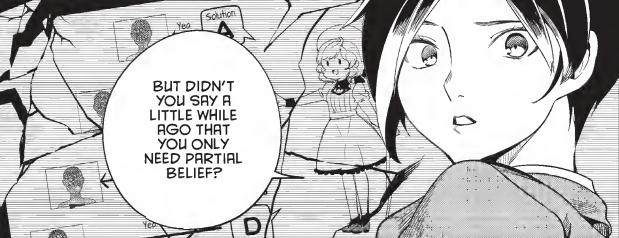
AND IS DECIDING HER FUTURE BY SELECTING THE ONES WITH THE SMALLEST NUMBER OF DISSENTERS.

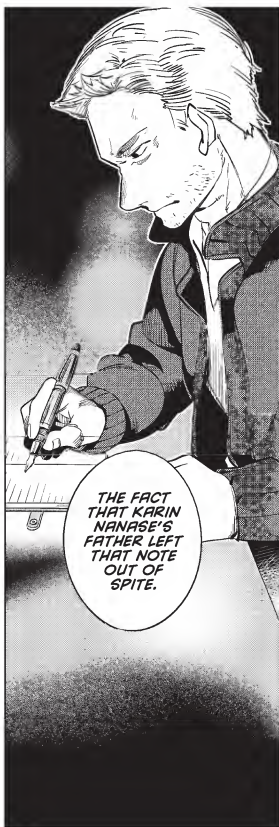
I SUSPECT RIKKA-SAN HAS THE SAME IDEA YOU DO,



THAT IS WHAT WILL LEAD HER INTO MY TRAP.



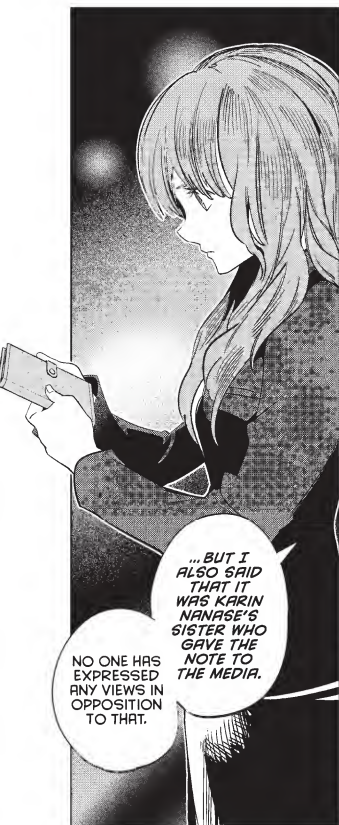




THE FACT
THAT KARIN
NANASE'S
FATHER LEFT
THAT NOTE
OUT OF
SPITE.



THE
FACT THAT
DETECTIVE
TERADA WAS
INVESTIGATING
STEEL LADY
NANASE INDE-
PENDENTLY.



NO ONE HAS
EXPRESSED
ANY VIEWS IN
OPPOSITION
TO THAT.

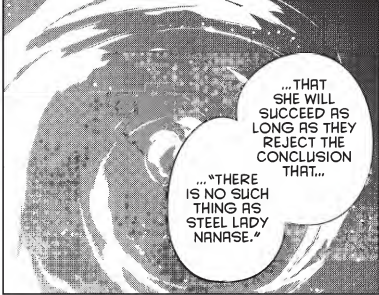
... BUT I
ALSO SAID
THAT IT
WAS KARIN
NANASE'S
SISTER WHO
GAVE THE
NOTE TO
THE MEDIA.



BUT
THE
BASIC
ELEMENTS
THEM-
SELVES
HAVE NOT
BEEN.

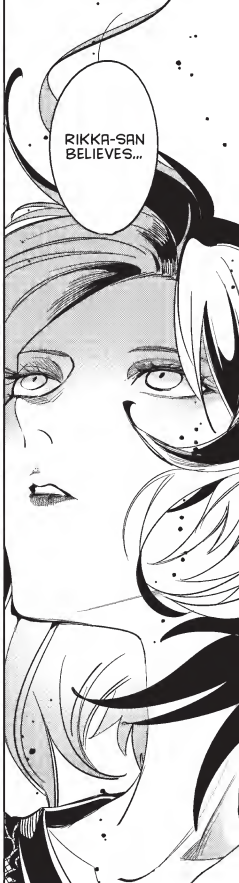
THE CON-
CLUSION
OF EACH
SOLUTION
MAY HAVE
BEEN RE-
JECTED,

EVEN WITH OUR
NEWLY REJECTED
SOLUTION
THREE—OUR
PORTRAIT OF
THE KILLER WAS
DISMISSED...

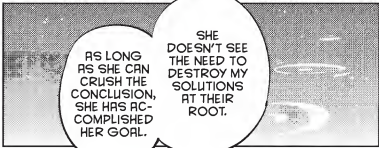


...THAT
SHE WILL
SUCCEED AS
LONG AS THEY
REJECT THE
CONCLUSION
THAT...

... "THERE
IS NO SUCH
THING AS
STEEL LADY
NANASE."

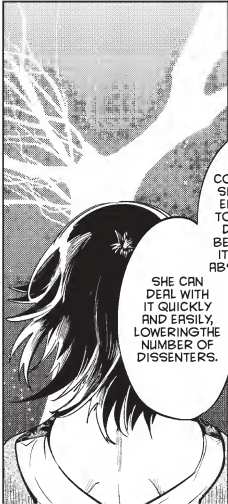


RIKKA-SAN
BELIEVES...



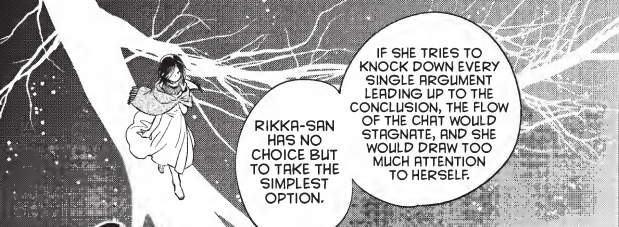
AS LONG
AS SHE CAN
CRUSH THE
CONCLUSION,
SHE HAS AC-
COMPLISHED
HER GOAL.

SHE
DOESN'T SEE
THE NEED TO
DESTROY MY
SOLUTIONS
AT THEIR
ROOT.



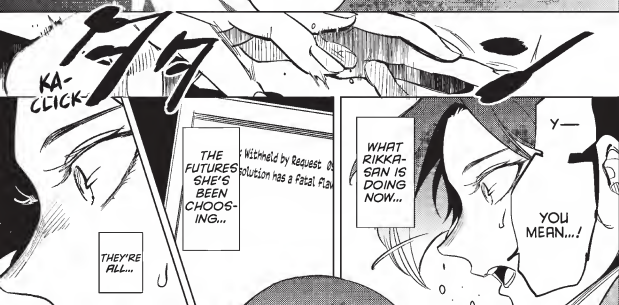
THE
CONCLU-
SION IS
EASIER
TO BEAT
DOWN
BECAUSE
IT IS AN
ABSOLUTE
LIE.

SHE CAN
DEAL WITH
IT QUICKLY
AND EASILY,
LOWERING THE
NUMBER OF
DISSENTERS.



RIKKA-SAN
HAS NO
CHOICE BUT
TO TAKE THE
SIMPLEST
OPTION.

IF SHE TRIES TO
KNOCK DOWN EVERY
SINGLE ARGUMENT
LEADING UP TO THE
CONCLUSION, THE FLOW
OF THE CHAT WOULD
STAGNATE, AND SHE
WOULD DRAW TOO
MUCH ATTENTION
TO HERSELF.



KA-
CLICK-

THEY'RE
ALL...

THE
FUTURES
SHE'S
BEEN
CHOOS-
ING...

Withheld by Request of
solution has a Fatal Flaw

WHAT
RIKKA-
SAN IS
DOING
NOW...

Y—

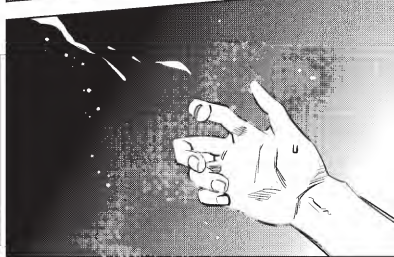
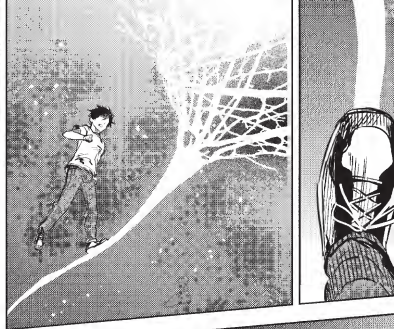
YOU
MEAN...!



EVERYTHING
IS NOW IN
PLACE.

ALL
THAT'S
LEFT IS TO
LAUNCH
MY FINAL
ATTACK.

...A PART
OF YOUR
PLAN?



FICTION
WILL BE
BORN
AND WITHIN THE
INVERT FICTION,
ITSELF
INTO
TRUTH.

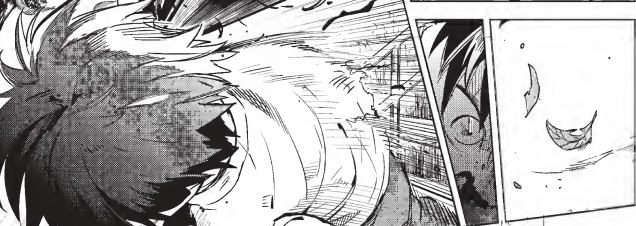
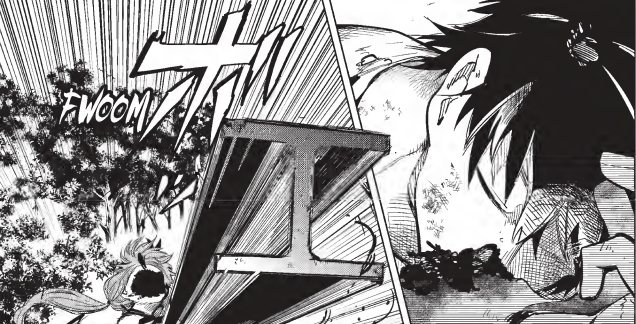






LET US
MOVE
ON...

...TO
SOLUTION
NUMBER
FOUR.



JUST WHAT I'VE
BEEN WAITING FOR!

COME ON, THAT'S
ENOUGH.

GIVE IT A
REST.

AND WHO IS THIS
"SOMEONE"?

STEEL LADY NANASE
IS A GHOST.

"SOMEONE
WHO CREATED
THE GHOST OF
STEEL LADY
NANASE..."

...AND
MURDERED
DETECTIVE
TERADA."

"SOMEONE
IS BEHIND
THIS."

"THE THREE
SOLUTIONS
I PRESENTED
PREVIOUSLY
WERE MERELY
A FOUNDATION,
LAYING THE
GROUNDWORK
FOR THE REAL
TRUTH."

"NEVERTHE-
LESS, STEEL
LADY NANASE
IS A FICTION."

KHEEN

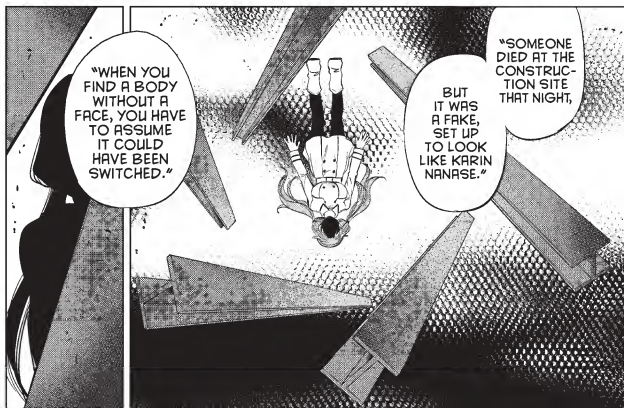


"...THAN
HARUKO
'KARIN'
NANASE."

"THE
KILLER
IS NONE
OTHER..."



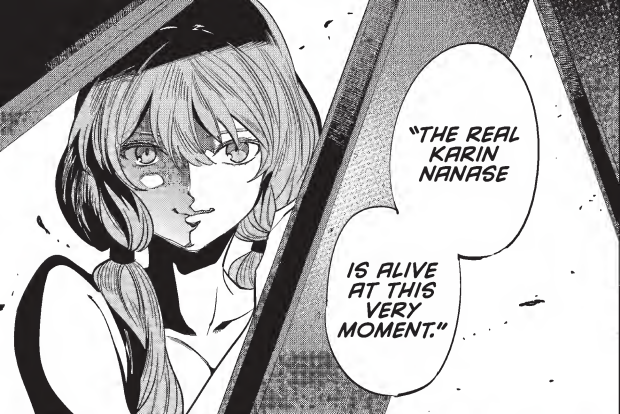
"SHE ISN'T
DEAD."



"WHEN YOU
FIND A BODY
WITHOUT A
FACE, YOU HAVE
TO ASSUME
IT COULD
HAVE BEEN
SWITCHED."

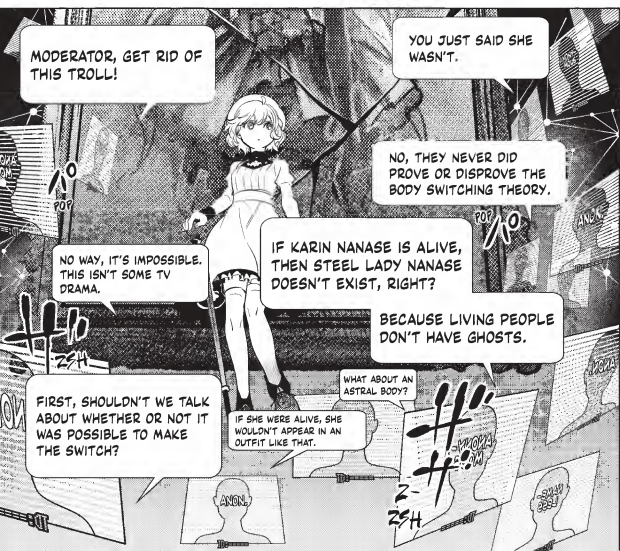
BUT
IT WAS
A FAKE,
SET UP
TO LOOK
LIKE KARIN
NANASE."

"SOMEONE
DIED AT THE
CONSTRUC-
TION SITE
THAT NIGHT,



"THE REAL
KARIN
NANASE

IS ALIVE
AT THIS
VERY
MOMENT."



MODERATOR, GET RID OF
THIS TROLL!

YOU JUST SAID SHE
WASN'T.

NO, THEY NEVER DID
PROVE OR DISPROVE THE
BODY SWITCHING THEORY.

NO WAY, IT'S IMPOSSIBLE.
THIS ISN'T SOME TV
DRAMA.

IF KARIN NANASE IS ALIVE,
THEN STEEL LADY NANASE
DOESN'T EXIST, RIGHT?

BECAUSE LIVING PEOPLE
DON'T HAVE GHOSTS.

FIRST, SHOULDN'T WE TALK
ABOUT WHETHER OR NOT IT
WAS POSSIBLE TO MAKE
THE SWITCH?

WHAT ABOUT AN
ASTRAL BODY?

IF SHE WERE ALIVE, SHE
WOULDN'T APPEAR IN AN
OUTFIT LIKE THAT.

ANON

2-
ZSH

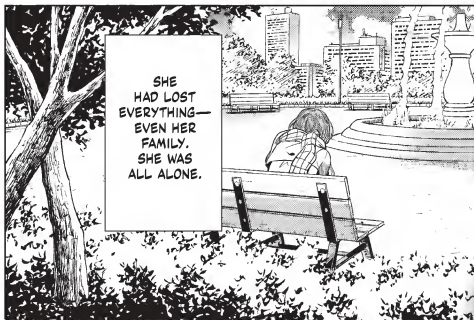
2-
ZSH



SUSPECTED
OF KILLING
HER FATHER
AND OUT OF
A JOB, KARIN
NANASE WAS
HIDING IN
MAKURAZAKA
CITY.



SHE'S
A SMART GIRL.
SHE PROBABLY
FIGURED OUT
IT WAS HER
FATHER AND
SISTER WHO
HAD TAKEN
HER DOWN.



SHE
HAD LOST
EVERYTHING—
EVEN HER
FAMILY.
SHE WAS
ALL ALONE.

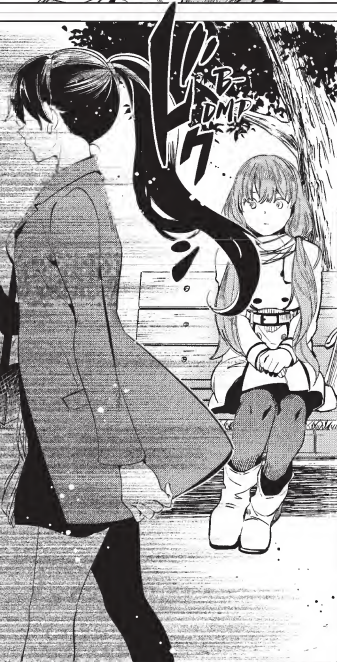




BUT... I'LL
NEVER BE AN
IDOL AGAIN.

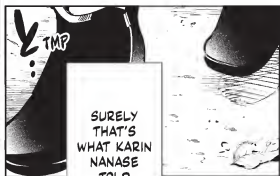
IF I
WAIT LONG
ENOUGH, THE
RUMORS WILL
DIE DOWN.

BUT
HOWEVER
DEEP HER
DESPAIR,
SUICIDE IS
ONE THING
SHE WOULD
NEVER
ATTEMPT.



I JUST
HAVE TO
START
OVER FROM
SCRATCH.

I'M STILL
YOUNG.



SURELY
THAT'S
WHAT KARIN
NANASE
TOLD
HERSELF.



BUT
THEN
...

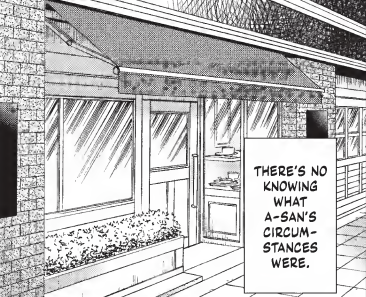


A black and white manga panel showing two young women standing in front of a large, ornate fountain. The woman on the left has long dark hair in a high ponytail and is wearing a patterned jacket over a dark top and skirt. The woman on the right has short, wavy hair and is wearing a light-colored jacket with a high collar and a backpack. They are both looking at each other. A speech bubble from the woman on the right is at the bottom, and a text box at the top contains a narrative line.

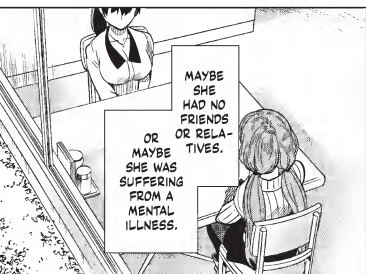
SHE
HAD HER
FATEFUL
ENCOUNTER.

I THOUGHT...
YOU LOOK SO
MUCH LIKE ME.





THERE'S NO
KNOWING
WHAT
A-SAN'S
CIRCUM-
STANCES
WERE.



MAYBE
SHE
HAD NO
FRIENDS
OR RELA-
TIVES.

OR
MAYBE
SHE WAS
SUFFERING
FROM A
MENTAL
ILLNESS.



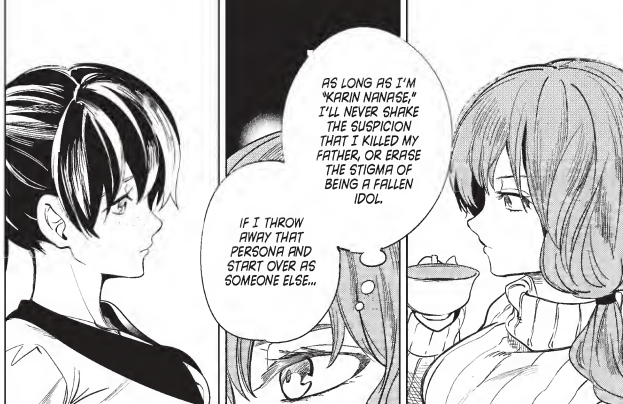
UNFOR-
TUNATELY,
HOWEVER,
KARIN NANASE
FOUND HER.



THEIR
FACES MAY
HAVE BEEN
DIFFERENT,
BUT THEIR
HAIR LENGTH,
PHYSIQUE, AND
AGE WERE ALL
VERY SIMILAR.

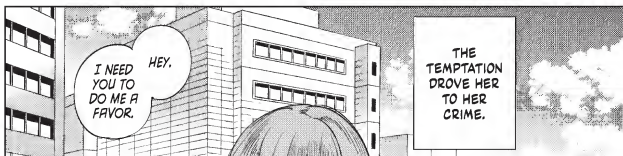
WE'LL
CALL HER
A-SAN
FOR NOW.

...?



AS LONG AS I'M
"KARIN NANASE,"
I'LL NEVER SHAKE
THE SUSPICION
THAT I KILLED MY
FATHER, OR ERASE
THE STIGMA OF
BEING A FALLEN
IDOL.

IF I THROW
AWAY THAT
PERSONA AND
START OVER AS
SOMEONE ELSE...



HEY.
I NEED
YOU TO
DO ME A
FAVOR.

THE
TEMPTATION
DROVE HER
TO HER
CRIME.

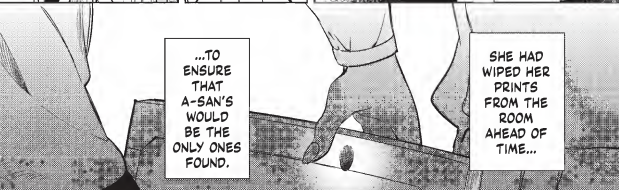


KARIN
NANASE
CLEVERLY
LURED
A-SAN
INTO HER
HOTEL
ROOM.





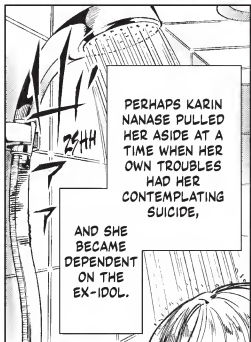
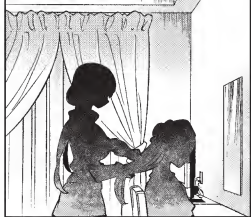
SHE MADE
SURE
A-SAN'S
FINGER-
PRINTS
FOUND
THEIR WAY
ONTO HER
BELONG-
INGS.



...TO
ENSURE
THAT
A-SAN'S
WOULD
BE THE
ONLY ONES
FOUND.

SHE HAD
WIPED HER
PRINTS
FROM THE
ROOM
AHEAD OF
TIME...





PERHAPS KARIN
NANASE PULLED
HER ASIDE AT A
TIME WHEN HER
OWN TROUBLES
HAD HER
CONTEMPLATING
SUICIDE,

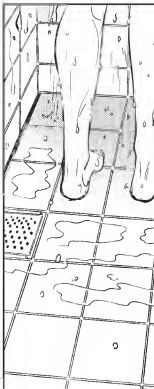
AND SHE
BECAME
DEPENDENT
ON THE
EX-IDOL.

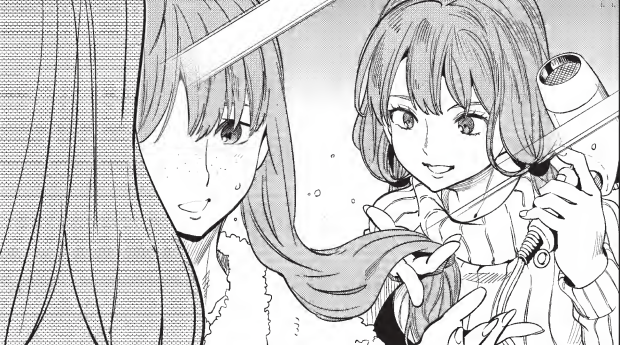


A-SAN
MOST LIKELY
HAD SOME
REASON TO
COOPERATE
WITH KARIN
NANASE.



IT'S ALSO
PLAUSIBLE
THAT SHE WENT
ALONG WITH IT
IN EXCHANGE
FOR A PROMISE
OF FINANCIAL
ASSISTANCE.





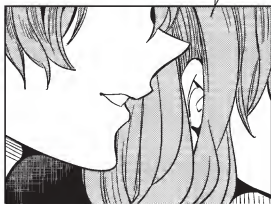
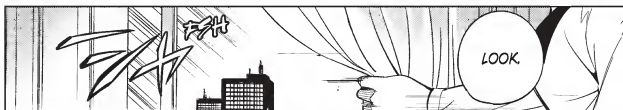
ARE YOU
SURE THIS
WILL WORK,
KARIN-CHAN?

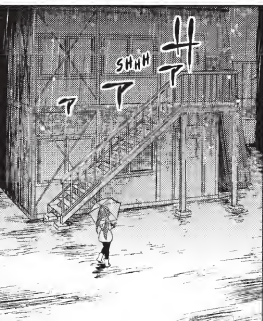


THEY MIGHT
FIGURE IT OUT
TOO FAST FOR
IT TO DO ANY
GOOD...



SO I'M SUPPOSED
TO MAKE THE MEDIA
THINK I'M YOU, AND
LURE THEM AWAY.







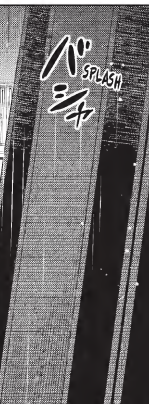
...SHE CAME
ACROSS A
DRAMATIC WAY
TO RESTART
HER LIFE.

O, BUT
IN THE
DEPTHS
OF HER
DESPAIR...

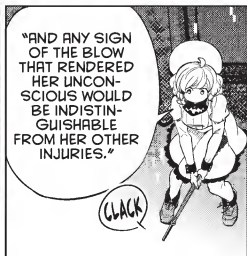


IF NANASE, KARIN HAD
NEVER ENCOUNTERED
A-SAN, SHE WOULD
PROBABLY HAVE LET
THE RUMORS RUN THEIR
COURSE AND WOULD
HAVE LIVED A HAPPY,
NORMAL LIFE.



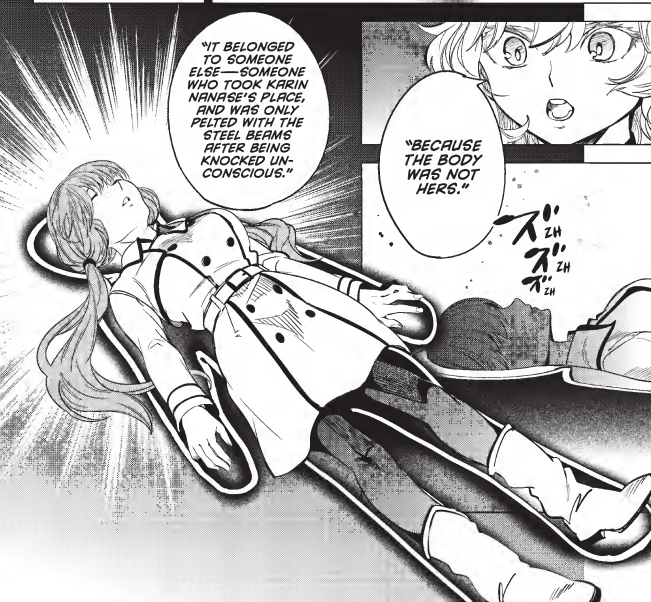






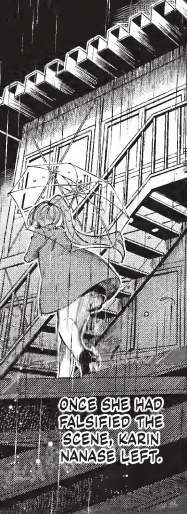


"WHY DIDN'T
KARIN NANASE
TRY TO DODGE
THE BEAMS THAT
WERE COMING
DIRECTLY FOR
HER FACE?"

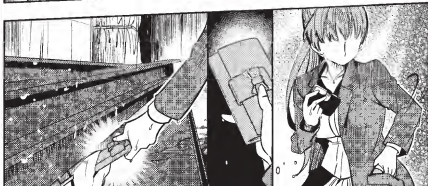
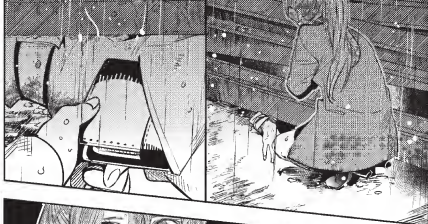


"IT BELONGED
TO SOMEONE
ELSE—SOMEONE
WHO TOOK KARIN
NANASE'S PLACE,
AND WAS ONLY
PELTED WITH THE
STEEL BEAMS
AFTER BEING
KNOCKED UN-
CONSCIOUS."

"BECAUSE
THE BODY
WAS NOT
HERS."

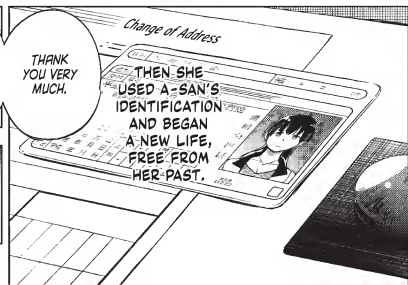


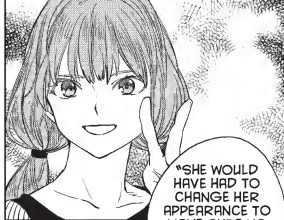
ONCE SHE HAD
FALSIFIED THE
SCENE, KARIN
NANASE LEFT.



HERE'S
YOUR
LICENSE
BACK.

THANK
YOU VERY
MUCH.





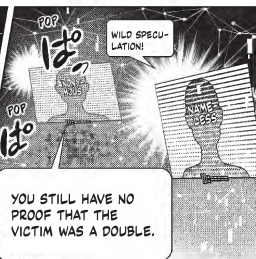
"SHE WOULD HAVE HAD TO CHANGE HER APPEARANCE TO MAKE SURE NO ONE RECOGNIZED HER, BUT THAT WOULD BE RELATIVELY SIMPLE."



"A GUTSY GIRL LIKE HER COULD PULL IT OFF."



"IF IT WAS KARIN NANASE WHO DIED, THEN THERE'S A CERTAIN ELEMENT...
...THAT WE'D BE AT PAINS TO EXPLAIN."



"YOU STILL HAVE NO PROOF THAT THE VICTIM WAS A DOUBLE."

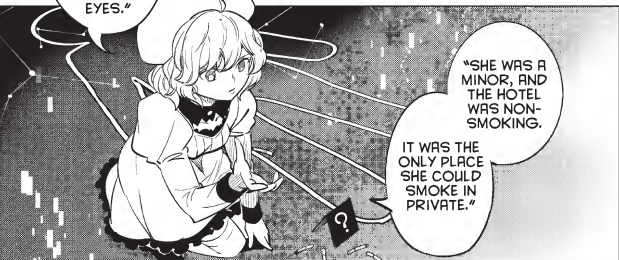


"THE CIGARETTES."



"THE PREVAILING THEORY IS THAT, THAT NIGHT, KARIN NANASE WENT..."

"...TO THE RAINY CONSTRUCTION SITE SO SHE COULD SMOKE AWAY FROM PRYING EYES."



"SHE WAS A MINOR, AND THE HOTEL WAS NON-SMOKING."

"IT WAS THE ONLY PLACE SHE COULD SMOKE IN PRIVATE."



"CIGARETTE BOXES WERE DISCOVERED IN HER HOTEL ROOM, AS WELL."

"THERE WERE CIGARETTE BUTTS AT THE SCENE, AND A BOX OF CIGARETTES AND A LIGHTER WERE FOUND AMONG THE VICTIM'S BELONGINGS."



...WELL,
NOT NECES-
SARILY.

BUT
I'LL SAY
THERE
IS.

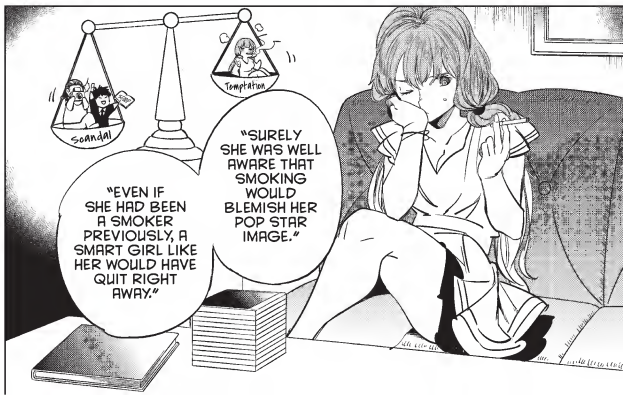


"THERE
DOESN'T
SEEM TO BE
A PROBLEM
HERE, BUT IN
FACT THERE
IS."



"SHE WAS
A MINOR, AND
HAD DEBUTED
AS AN IDOL
WHILE STILL IN
HIGH SCHOOL."

"SIMPLY PUT,
IT DOESN'T
MAKE SENSE
TO ASSUME
THAT KARIN
NANASE WAS IN
THE HABIT OF
SMOKING."



"EVEN IF
SHE HAD BEEN
A SMOKER
PREVIOUSLY, A
SMART GIRL LIKE
HER WOULD HAVE
QUIT RIGHT
AWAY."

"SURELY
SHE WAS WELL
AWARE THAT
SMOKING
WOULD
BLEMISH HER
POP STAR
IMAGE."

MAYBE SHE STARTED SMOKING FROM
THE STRESS OF BEING ON THE RUN
FROM MURDER ACCUSATIONS.

OR MAYBE SHE WAS A
SMOKER BEFORE, STOPPED
FOR A WHILE, AND TOOK IT
UP AGAIN?

ANONY-
MOUS

POP

IF ANYONE
FOUND HER
SMOKING,
IT WOULD
JUST BE
MORE
FODDER
FOR THE
MEDIA."

"SHE WOULD
HAVE BEEN
HOPING FOR
THINGS TO
BLOW OVER
QUICKLY.

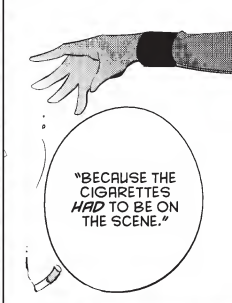
"EVEN IF THAT
WERE THE
CASE, THAT
WOULD BE TOO
CONVOLUTED."

"THEN WHY
WERE THERE
CIGARETTES
ON THE
SCENE?"

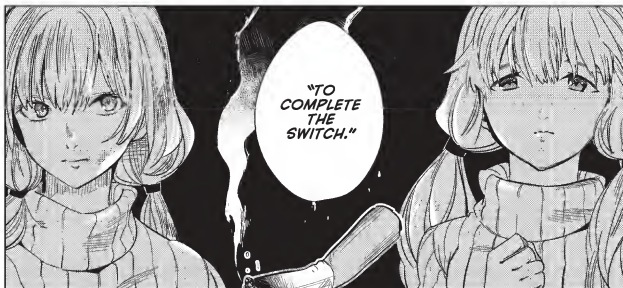
"SHE WOULDN'T
START SMOKING
WHEN THE RISKS
WERE SO HIGH."



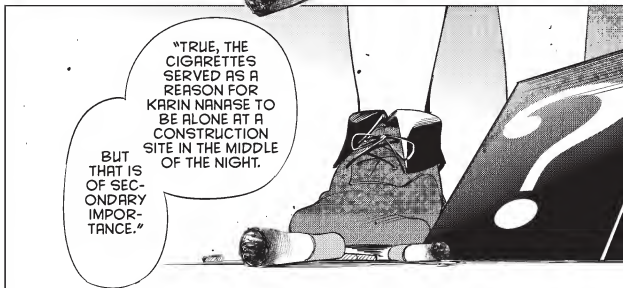
"BUT IF
SHE WASN'T A
SMOKER, WHY
WOULD THE
CIGARETTES
HAVE TO BE
THERE?"



"BECAUSE THE
CIGARETTES
HAD TO BE ON
THE SCENE."

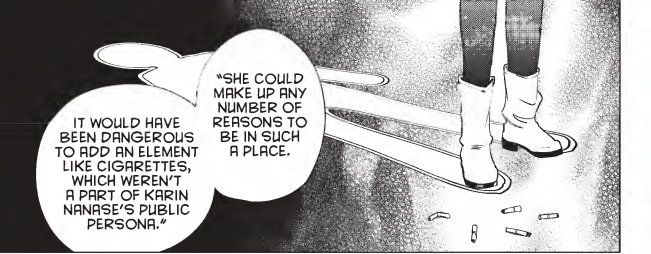


"TO
COMPLETE
THE
SWITCH."



"TRUE, THE
CIGARETTES
SERVED AS A
REASON FOR
KARIN NANASE TO
BE ALONE AT A
CONSTRUCTION
SITE IN THE MIDDLE
OF THE NIGHT.

BUT
THAT IS
OF SEC-
ONDARY
IMPOR-
TANCE."

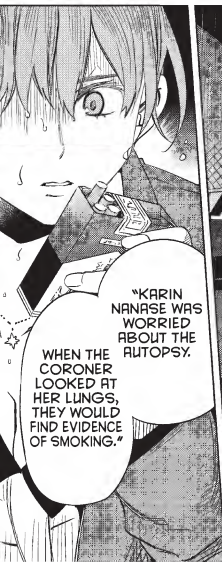


IT WOULD HAVE BEEN DANGEROUS TO ADD AN ELEMENT LIKE CIGARETTES, WHICH WEREN'T A PART OF KARIN NANASE'S PUBLIC PERSONA."

"SHE COULD MAKE UP ANY NUMBER OF REASONS TO BE IN SUCH A PLACE."



"YET SHE DID IT ANYWAY."



WHEN THE CORONER LOOKED AT HER LUNGS, THEY WOULD FIND EVIDENCE OF SMOKING."

"KARIN NANASE WAS WORRIED ABOUT THE AUTOPSY."



"BECAUSE HER REPLACEMENT—A-SAN—WAS A SMOKER."



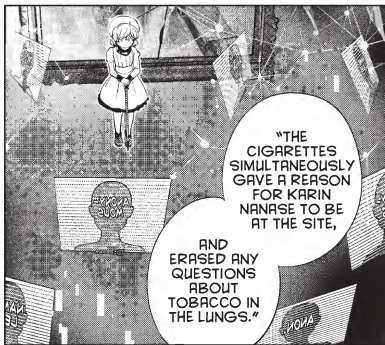
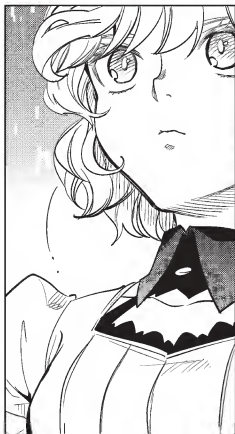
"NO ONE
WOULD TESTIFY
THAT THE POP
STAR HAD
EVER BEEN A
SMOKER."



"IF THE
BODY HAD
BLACKENED
LUNGS,
PEOPLE
WOULD
SUSPECT
SOMETHING."

"TO
NULLIFY
THOSE
SUSPI-
CIONS,

SHE NEEDED
TO MAKE IT
LOOK LIKE
KARIN NANASE
HAD BEEN A
SMOKER."



"THE
CIGARETTES
SIMULTANEOUSLY
GAVE A REASON
FOR KARIN
NANASE TO BE
AT THE SITE,

AND
ERASED ANY
QUESTIONS
ABOUT
TOBACCO IN
THE LUNGS."

"THE BODY
THAT WAS
DISCOVERED AT
THE CONSTRUCTION
SITE IN MAKURAZAKA
THIS YEAR ON
JANUARY 30TH
DID NOT BELONG
TO KARIN
NANASE."

"SHE
TRICKED
US ALL
WITH A
FACELESS
CORPSE."

KARIN
NANASE
IS
ALIVE."

"THERE
COULD
NEVER BE
ANY SUCH
GHOST AS
STEEL LADY
NANASE."

BUT WHY?

MURMUR

IF KARIN NANASE IS ALIVE,
THEN WHAT THE HELL IS
STEEL LADY NANASE?

MAYBE SHE DID IT TO
MAKE PEOPLE BELIEVE
SHE'S REALLY DEAD?

IF THERE'S A GHOST,
THAT MEANS KARIN
NANASE HAS TO BE
DEAD.

THEN EVEN IF PEOPLE
RUN INTO KARIN NANASE IN
HER NEW LIFE AND SEE A
RESEMBLANCE, SHE WON'T
HAVE TO WORRY ABOUT
ANYONE CATCHING ON.

330 Name Withheld by Request 09/05 00:15
No. No way!

333 Name Withheld by Request 09/05 00:15
Well, it's not impossible.

334 Name Withheld by Request 09/05 00:15
What about the cigarettes?

335 Name Withheld by Request 09/05 00:15
Who cares if she smokes?

336 Name Withheld by Request 09/05 00:15
A-san? Way too convenient.

337 Name Withheld by Request 09/05 00:16
But if the body isn't Karin Nanase

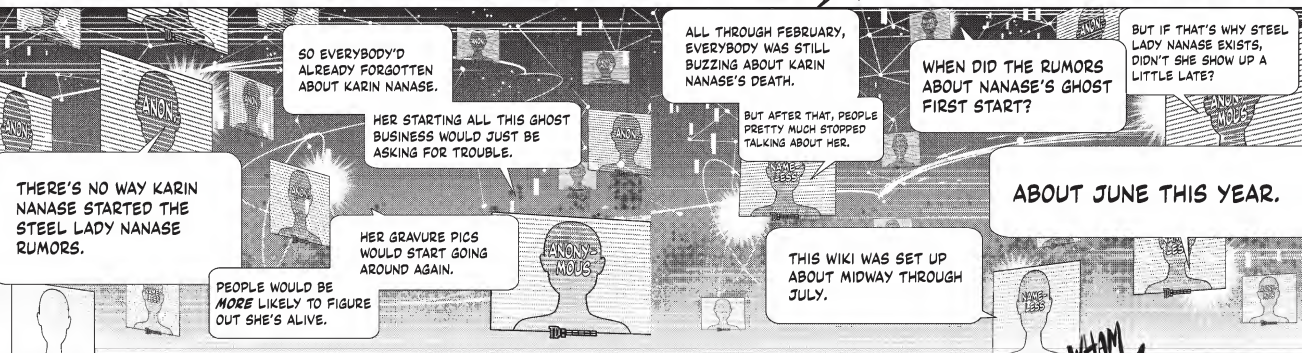
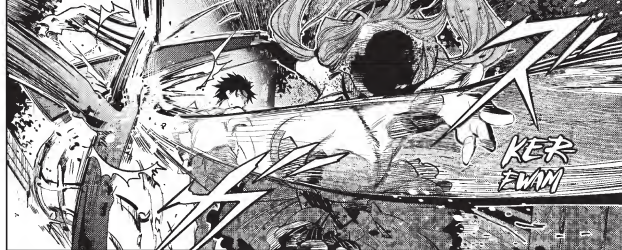
338 Name Withheld by Request 09/05 00:16
No, it IS Nanase's body.

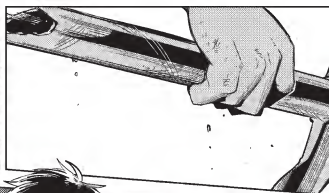
339 Name Withheld by Request 09/05 00:16
It was totally switched with ~~another~~ person.
It's a faceless corpse, guys.

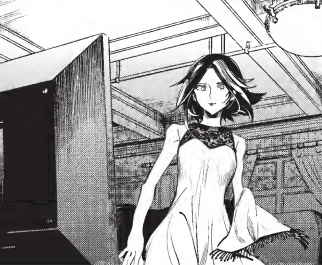
POF 18
THEN WHAT ABOUT
STEEL LADY
NANASE?

KARIN NANASE MADE
HER UP, OF COURSE.

POF 18







WAIT A SECOND. WHAT
IF WE LOOK AT IT THIS
WAY?

KARIN NANASE WAS LIVING IN PEACE
UNTIL ABOUT MAY, BUT THEN THE PEOPLE
AROUND HER STARTED UP SOME RUMORS,
LIKE, "HEY, SHE LOOKS LIKE THAT IDOL."

THAT'S POSSIBLE.
PLASTIC SURGERY TAKES TIME
AND MONEY, AND IT CAN ONLY
DO SO MUCH.

I BET HER FIGURE AND
PERSONALITY ATTRACT
ATTENTION ANYWAY, SO IF SHE
RAN INTO SOMEBODY WHO
KNOWS A LOT ABOUT POP STARS,
THEY MIGHT START A RUMOR.

I GET IT. SO KARIN
NANASE WOULD HAVE
MOVED AWAY FROM
THERE.

BUT IF SHE GOT WORRIED
THAT THE SAME THING COULD
HAPPEN AGAIN...



YEAH. THIS.

THEN, TO KILL KARIN
NANASE OFF COMPLETELY,

SHE INVENTED THE STEEL
LADY NANASE HOAX!

Someone gave it to the media.

and that someone could be
Karin Nanase's sister.

And the key to that

was in the time before
the note he left before
telling of his daughter's
evil scheme.

**THEY
INVOLVED
DIFFERENT
PEOPLE AND
DIFFERENT
DETAILS...**

If you know the trick behind the
murder and the reason she made up the
Steel Lady Nanase incidents, then it's
enough to identify the suspects.

**...BUT ALL
OF THESE
ELEMENTS
WERE
SPRINKLED
THROUGH-
OUT HER
FIRST THREE
SOLUTIONS.**

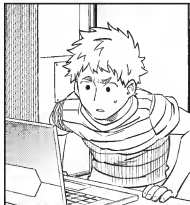
Which is why 'ghost' made sure
it could only be a ghost of the
dead. Steel Lady Nanase has no face,
carries around a steel girder, and
Karin Nanase's stage costume
add up to a ghost.

**THEY'RE
PRESENTING
THEIR OWN
SOLUTIONS.**





SIGN: NATIONAL TRAFFIC SAFETY CAMPAIGN



AND SHE DIDN'T WANT ANYONE TO THINK IT WAS AN ASTRAL BODY. THAT'S WHY SHE MADE UP THE CHARACTER OF STEEL LADY NANASE, WITH THE STEEL BEAM AND THE SMASHED FACE.

AND GAVE HER A NAME THAT REALLY PACKS A PUNCH.



YEAH, AT LEAST TWO OR THREE TIMES. AND TO MAKE THE RUMORS SPREAD FASTER, SHE USED THE I-BEAM AND THE RIBBON.

AND SHOOK HER BOOBS.

SO THE REAL KARIN NANASE DRESSED UP AS STEEL LADY NANASE AND WENT AROUND ATTACKING PEOPLE?



THEY JUST
HAVE TO PICK
UP THE PIECES
FROM THOSE
SOLUTIONS
AND PUT THEM
IN PLACE, AND
THEY CAN FIND
AN ANSWER.

...IS THE
SAME
AS IN
SOLU-
TION
THREE.

THIS LOGIC
FOR WHY
SHE NEEDED
STEEL LADY
NANASE...

IWANAGA-SAN
TAUGHT THEM
HOW MUCH
FUN IT IS
TO COME
UP WITH
REASONABLE
EXPLANATIONS
FOR URBAN
LEGENDS.

THAT
WAS THE
REAL REASON
SHE GAVE
MULTIPLE
SOLUTIONS.

<368> Name: Withhe
Then Nanase



UNTIL NOW,
THIS WIKI
HARNESSED
THE POWER OF
HUNDREDS OF
THOUSANDS
OF
IMAGINATIONS
TO GIVE LIFE
TO STEEL
LADY NANASE.

<369> Name: Withhe
No, that's a

<370> Name: Withhe
Here she

<371> Name: Withhe
That's w

<372> Name: Withhe
Nanase



BUT
THAT'S
CHANGED.



NOW,
THE SITE'S
VIEWERS ARE
ALL EXERCISING
THEIR
CREATIVITY
AROUND THE
IDEA THAT
THERE IS NO
STEEL LADY
NANASE.

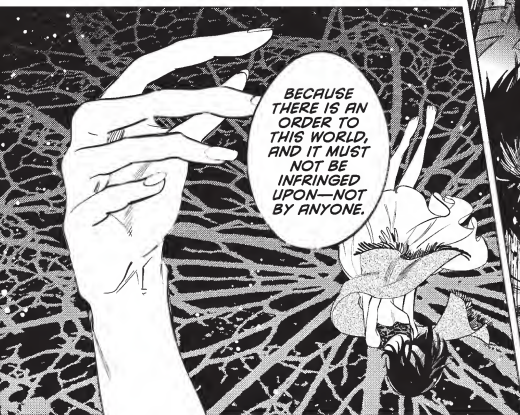




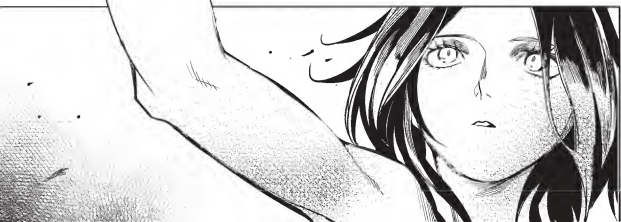
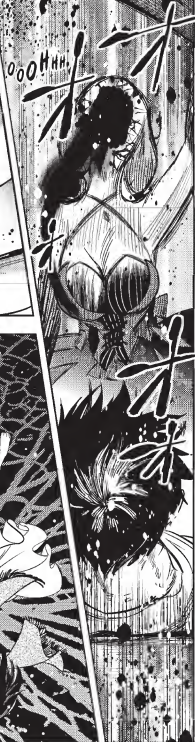


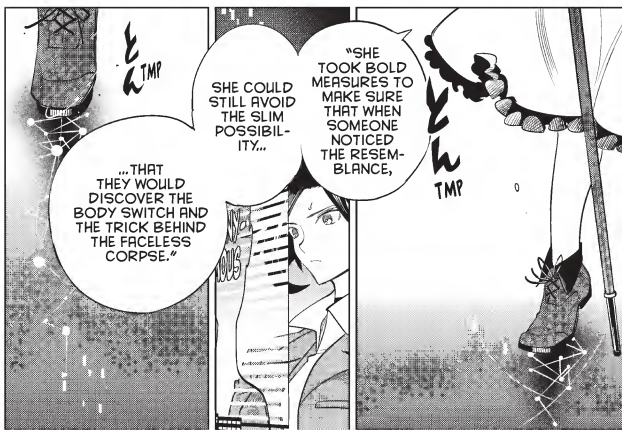
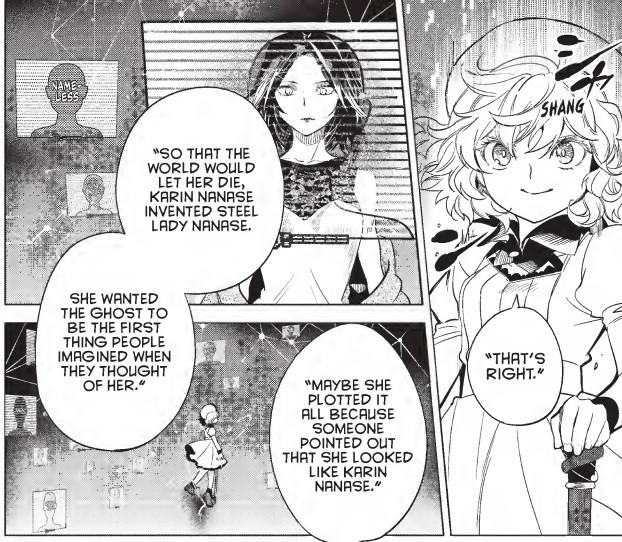
RIKKA-SAN.

I WILL
NOT LET
YOU TAKE
HOLD
OF THE
FUTURE
YOU'RE
AFTER.



BECAUSE
THERE IS AN
ORDER TO
THIS WORLD,
AND IT MUST
NOT BE
INFRINGED
UPON—NOT
BY ANYONE.







"SHE
WOULD HAVE
DONE A
CONVINCING
JOB—SHE
WAS PLAYING
HER OWN
GHOST."

CLACK

"KARIN
NANASE
APPEARED
NIGHT AFTER
NIGHT IN
MAKURA-
ZAKA
CITY.

AND
PLAYED
THE PART
OF STEEL
LADY
NANASE."



"AND, TO
CONVINCE
PEOPLE OF
THE 'TRUTH'
OF HER
GHOST
STORY,

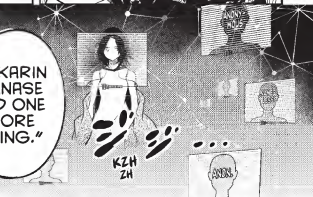
AND
SPREAD
THE TALE
MORE
EFFICIENT-
LY..."



"THE
RUMORS
SPREAD,
THE NAME
STARTED
TRENDING
ON THE
INTERNET."



"...KARIN
NANASE
DID ONE
MORE
THING."



KZH
ZH





"I KNOW
THAT YOU
STARTED
THIS
SITE..."



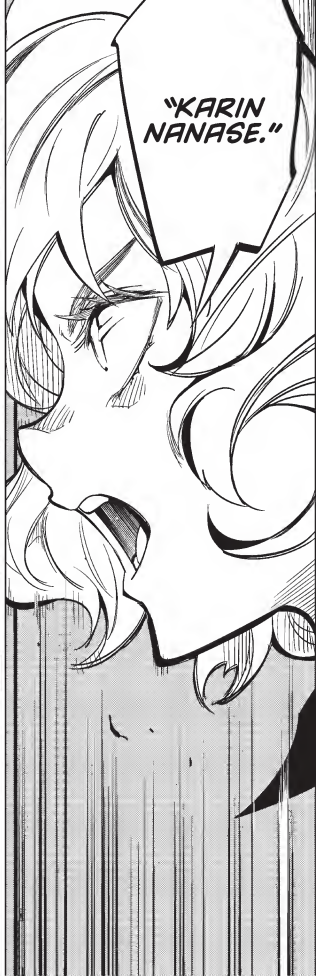
KARIN NANASE
IS ALIVE?!

HUH?

NO WAY!

"...AND
THAT
YOU ARE
ITS WEB-
MASTER."

YOU ARE
READING
MY POSTS
AS WE
SPEAK."

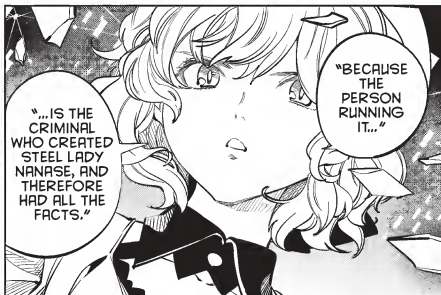


"KARIN
NANASE."



"...I
HAVE
BEEN
WORKING
TO
EXPOSE
YOU."

"FROM
THE VERY
BEGINNING..."



You tried to reject every
single solution I presented.



"THAT'S WHY YOU SO STUBBORNLY REBUT-
TED MY CLAIMS."



EVERYTHING ABOUT
STEEL LADY
NANASE AND
ALL FOUR
OF HER
SOLUTIONS...

EVERY-
THING
SHE'S
MEN-
TIONED...



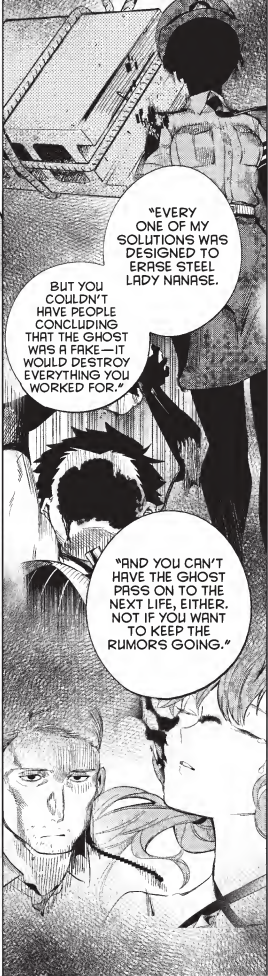
"YOU EVEN
TRIED TO
CENSOR MY
POSTS."

THEY
WERE
ALL
LIES.



YOU
KNOW
THE ONE
WHO
OPENED
THIS
SITE AND
RUNS IT...

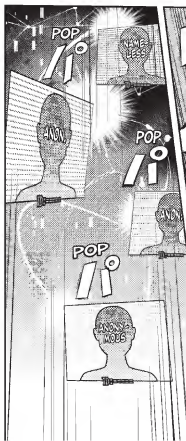
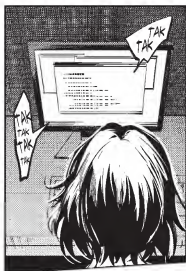
HOW
CAN
YOU
SAY
THAT?!



"EVERY
ONE OF MY
SOLUTIONS WAS
DESIGNED TO
ERASE STEEL
LADY NANASE."

BUT YOU
COULDN'T
HAVE PEOPLE
CONCLUDING
THAT THE GHOST
WAS A FAKE—IT
WOULD DESTROY
EVERYTHING YOU
WORKED FOR."

"AND YOU CAN'T
HAVE THE GHOST
PASS ON TO THE
NEXT LIFE, EITHER.
NOT IF YOU WANT
TO KEEP THE
RUMORS GOING."



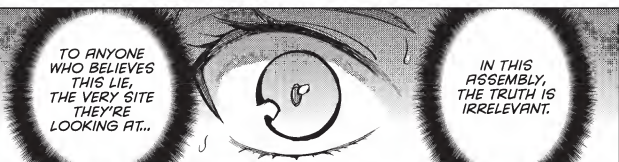


DID YOU MAKE THIS SITE
TO SPREAD THE STEEL
LADY NANASE RUMORS?!

KARIN-CHAN!
CAN YOU READ MY
POSTS, TOO?

IF IT IS KARIN
NANASE, IT'S
POSSIBLE.

I WAS JUST HERE LOOKING
UP URBAN LEGENDS, AND NOW LOOK
WHAT I'M IN THE MIDDLE OF...

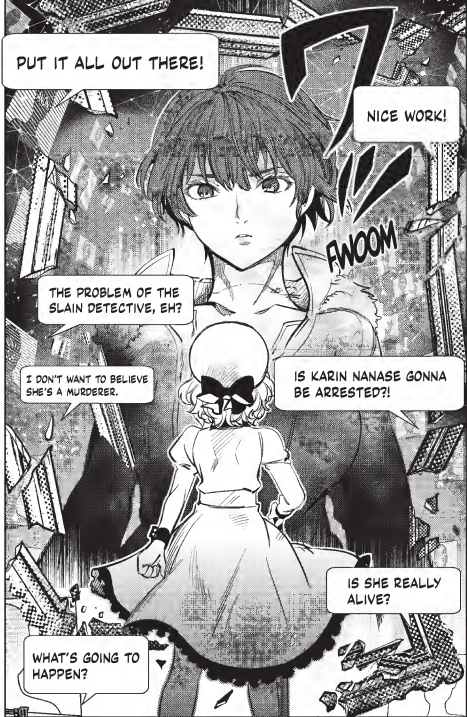


TO ANYONE
WHO BELIEVES
THIS LIE,
THE VERY SITE
THEY'RE
LOOKING AT...

IN THIS
ASSEMBLY,
THE TRUTH IS
IRRELEVANT.



...IS THE
FRONT
LINE
OF THE
STEEL
LADY
NANASE
CASE.



PUT IT ALL OUT THERE!

NICE WORK!

THE PROBLEM OF THE
SLAIN DETECTIVE, EH?

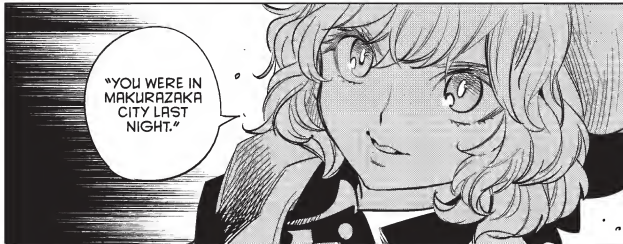
I DON'T WANT TO BELIEVE
SHE'S A MURDERER.

IS KARIN NANASE GONNA
BE ARRESTED?!

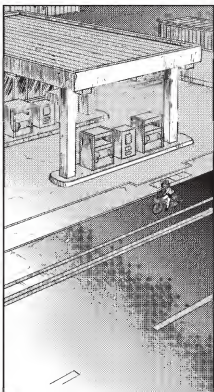
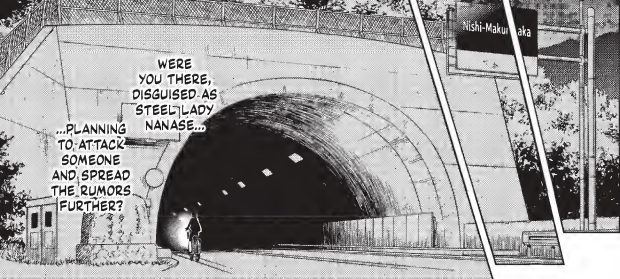
WHAT'S GOING TO
HAPPEN?

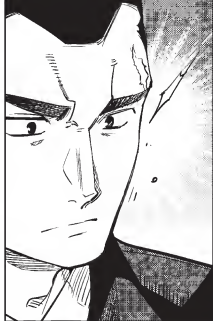
IS SHE REALLY
ALIVE?

"NOW
ALLOW ME
TO EXPLAIN
WHY AND
HOW YOU
KILLED
DETECTIVE
TERADA."

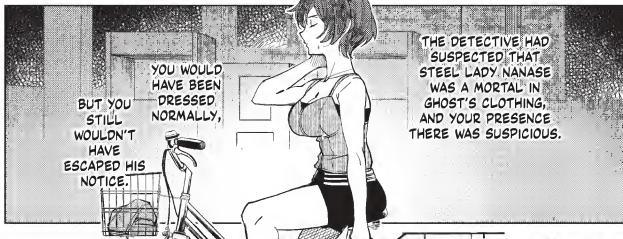
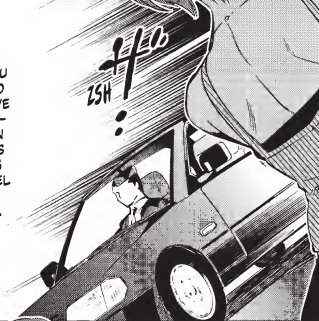


"YOU WERE IN
MAKURAZAKA
CITY LAST
NIGHT."





THAT'S
WHEN YOU
RAN INTO
DETECTIVE
TERADA—
THE MAN
WHO WAS
LOOKING
FOR STEEL
LADY
NANASE.



BUT YOU
STILL
WOULDN'T
HAVE
ESCAPED HIS
NOTICE.

YOU WOULD
HAVE BEEN
DRESSED
NORMALLY,

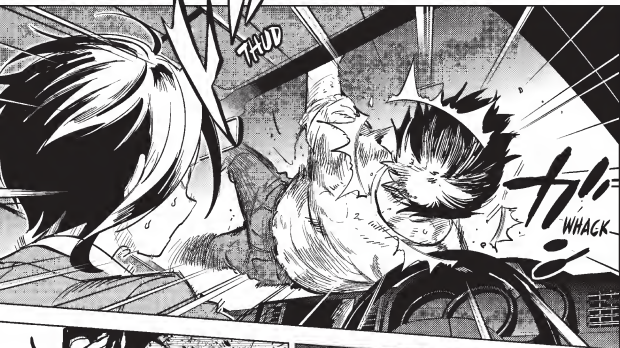
THE DETECTIVE HAD
SUSPECTED THAT
STEEL LADY NANASE
WAS A MORTAL IN
GHOST'S CLOTHING,
AND YOUR PRESENCE
THERE WAS SUSPICIOUS.

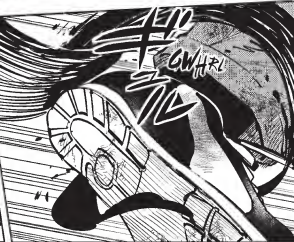


YOUR BUST
REMINDS HIM
OF STEEL LADY
NANASE, AND HIS
INTUITION WENT
TO WORK!

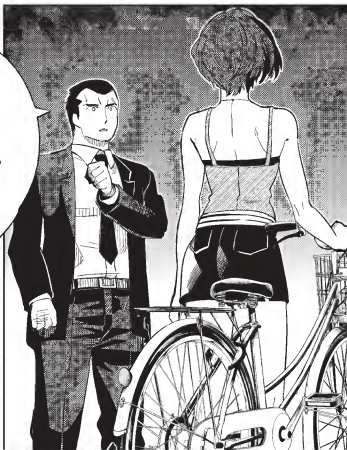
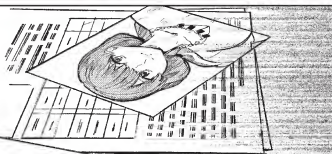
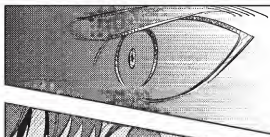
NOT WITH
THOSE
OVER-SIZED
BREASTS.

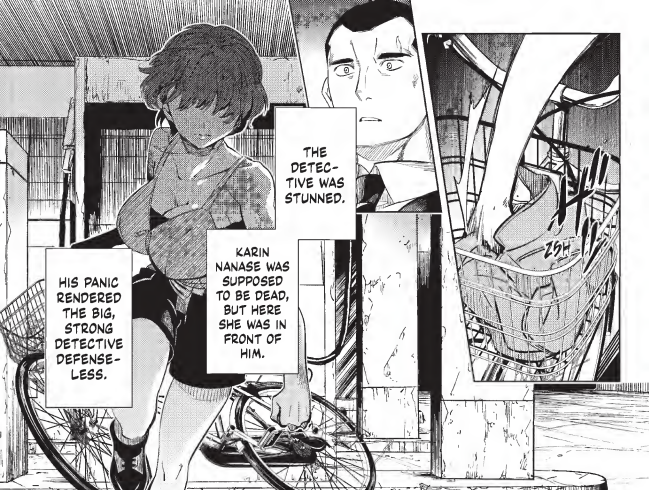










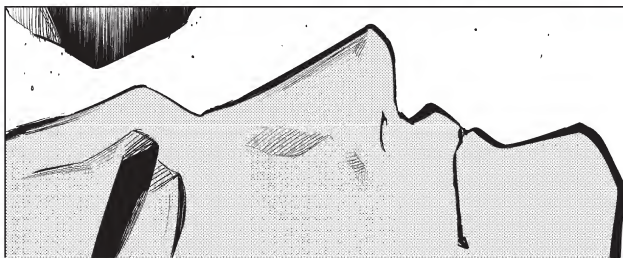


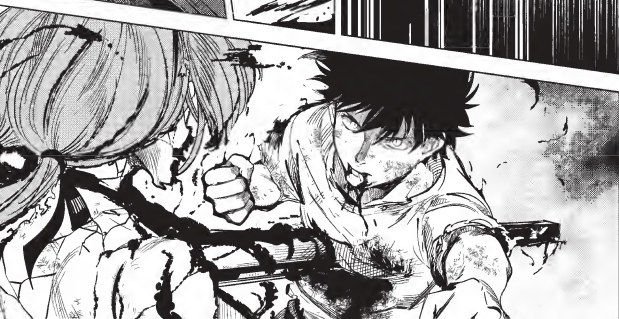
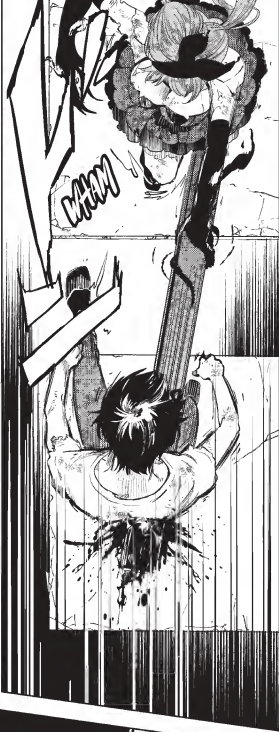


IF PEOPLE CONNECTED THE MURDER TO THE GHOST, THE RUMORS WOULD GO HAND IN HAND, ALL WORKING TOWARD YOUR ULTIMATE GOAL.





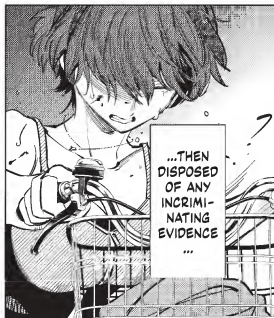




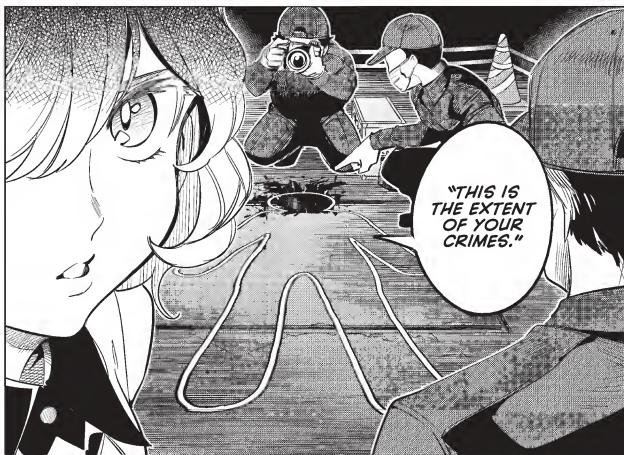


...AND
LEFT
THE GAS
STATION.

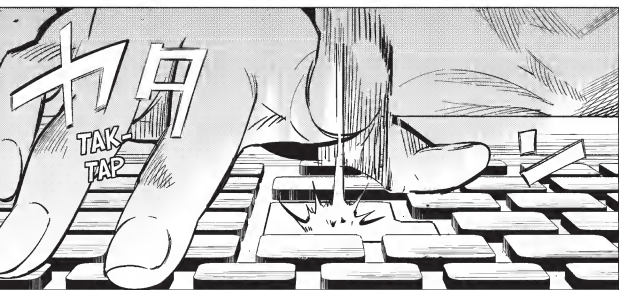
YOU PICKED
UP THE
NEAREST
HEAVY
OBJECT AND
DESTROYED
THE
DETECTIVE'S
FACE...



...THEN
DISPOSED
OF ANY INCRIMINATING
EVIDENCE
...



"THIS IS
THE EXTENT
OF YOUR
CRIMES."





<538> Name: kuebiko 09/05 00:25 ID:Mmimn43
But if you can,
prove to me that you are not Karin Nanase.

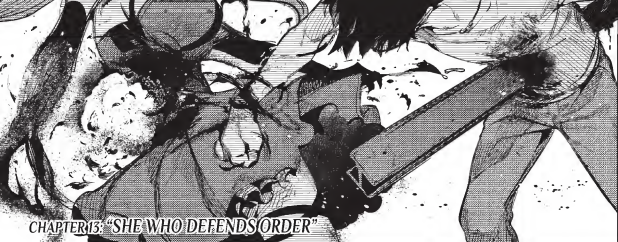






"KARIN
NANASE.
YOU
ARE THE
KILLER."





CHAPTER 13: "SHE WHO DEFENDS ORDER"

<539> Name: kuebiko 09/05 00:25 ID:Mmim
I'll say it again.
Karin Nanase, you are the killer.



613>

Name: Withheld by Request 09/
Karin Nanase is alive?!

Name: Withheld by Request 09/05 00:28 ID:7ew34re
Hey,

Webmaster, if you're reading, come out here!

<618> Name: Withheld by Request 09/05 00:28 ID:fdx4w3x
Is the webmaster really Karin Nanase,
and is Karin Nanase really the killer?

6> Name: Withheld by Request
If she's a ghost,
wouldn't she appear again?

<624> Name: Withheld by Request
And Steel Lady Nanase is a fake?

9> Name: Withheld by Request 09/05
Yeah. Are there any Steel Lady Nanase
sightings tonight?

<625> Name: Withheld by Request 09/05 00:30
Who's posting all this stuff?
At first I thought they were just
playing around, making up theories.

10> Name: Withheld by Request 09/05 00:31
I haven't seen any posts about it.

Name: Withheld by Request 09/05 00:30
Maybe someone involved in the case?

51> Name: Withheld by Request 09/05 00:35 ID:51
And there were a ton of sightings up until
yesterday.
Isn't that weird?

Name: Withheld by Request 09/05 00:30
Impossible and you know it.

Name: Withheld by Request 09/05 00:31
My story.

52> Name: Withheld by Request 09/05 00:35 ID:jp:ho7r6
So the killer really is Karin Nanase?

<658> Name: Withheld by Request 09/05 00:36 ID: ykn234d
If Karin Nanase is alive, do you think she'll be arrested?

<659> Name: Withheld by Request 09/05 00:36 ID: ykn234d
I still don't believe it.
Switching the bodies?
That's impossible!

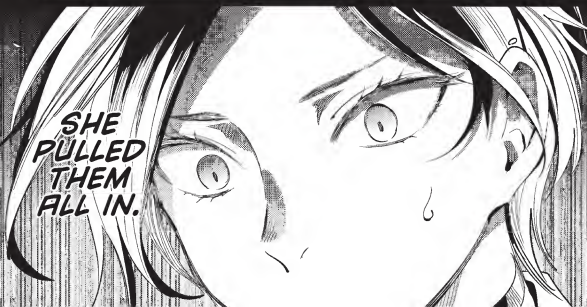
<667> Name: Withheld by Request 09/05 00:36 ID: ykn234d
Did we just witness the solving
of a mystery?

Name: Withheld by Request 09/05 00:36 ID: ykn234d
I don't know.
How can we possibly know?

Name: Withheld by Request 09/05 00:36 ID: ykn234d
But if it is true, we just experience
something awesome, right?

<668> Name: Withheld by Request 09/05 00:36 ID: ykn234d
Is it true?
Or false?

**SHE
PULLED
THEM
ALL IN.**



**SHE IS
UNEQUIVOCALLY
SUPPLANTING
STEEL LADY
NANASE...**

**AND SO
WAS THE
REJECTION
OF HER THREE
PREVIOUS
SOLUTIONS.**

**THIS
WEBSITE
IS PART
OF THE
KILLER'S
PLOT.**



**HOW
DID YOU
COME UP
WITH ALL
OF THIS?**

**... WITH
THE FACT
THAT KARIN
NANASE
IS ALIVE.**



**WHAT
IF SHE
COMES
ON AND
POSTS...**

**"I AM
NOT
KARIN
NANASE"**

**BUT
RIKKA-SAN
IS THE
REAL WEB-
MASTER.**

**WHO
WOULD
BELIEVE
IT?**

GASP



WHETHER SHE
SAYS SHE IS
KARIN NANASE
OR NOT, THE
CURRENT OF
THOUGHT WILL
NOT CHANGE.

EVERYONE
ALREADY
BELIEVES
THAT KARIN
NANASE IS
THE WEB-
MASTER.

THEY
LOVE THE
IDEA—IT'S
MUCH MORE
INTEREST-
ING.





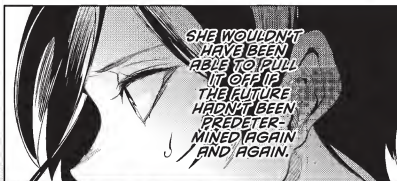
...HE
CHOSE
FUTURE
AFTER
FUTURE TO
DESTROY
THE
MONSTER.



...THAT
WOULD
MAKE THEM
BELIEVE HER
ULTIMATE
SOLUTION.

...USED HER
FIRST THREE
SOLUTIONS
TO FEED
EVERYONE
THE BASIC
ELEMENTS...

IWANAGA-
SAN...



SHE WOULDN'T
HAVE BEEN
ABLE TO PULL
IT OFF IF
THE FUTURE
HADN'T BEEN
PREDETER-
MINED AGAIN
AND AGAIN.



THROUGH
HIS
REPEATED
DEATHS...



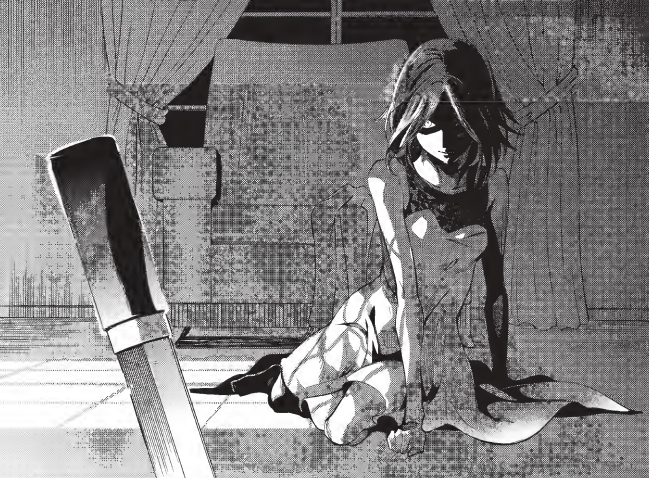
KURŌ-SENPAI
HAS DECIDED
THE FUTURE.

B-
DMP



NO
OPTIONS
TO CHANGE
THAT FUTURE
ARE WITHIN
RIKKA-SAN'S
REACH.

THAK



...TO
CONTROL
STEEL LADY
NANASE
AGAIN.





NOW THEN,
LADIES AND
GENTLEMEN
OF THE
COMMITTEE.

THE TIME
HAS COME
TO CAST
YOUR
VOTES.

TAK
TAK

TAK
TAK



IS THERE
SUCH A
GHOST AS
STEEL LADY
NANASE?

OR
ISN'T
THERE?

IF THE FUMORS WERE...
<722> Name: Withheld by Request 09/05 00:56 10/04/04
There's no such thing as Steel Lady Nanase.

<722> **THERE'S
NO NEED
FOR A
SPECIAL
PROCEDURE.**

Name: Withheld by Request 09/05 00:56 10/04/04
One's been saying it's a ghost.

Name: Withheld by Request 09/05 00:56 10/04/04
Nanase is dead.

**WHICH-
EVER YOU
CHOOSE, THE
VOTES WILL
BE CAST
AUTOMATICALLY.**

<722> Name: Withheld by Request 09/05 00:56 10/04/04
The police probably... looks into it

Name: Withheld by Request 09/05 00:56 10/04/04
Nanase:

**I SIMPLY
NEED ALL
OF YOU TO
FREELY
MAKE
YOUR
WISH,**

**IN YOUR
OWN MIND,
BASED ON
YOUR OWN
CONSCIENCE.**

Name: Withheld by Request 09/05 00:56 10/04/04
There is no ghost.





THERE
ARE TRUE
SPECTRES
IN THE
WORLD,
BUT THERE
ARE ALSO
MANY
FALSE
ONES.

AND THE
MONSTER
BORN OF
A LIE...

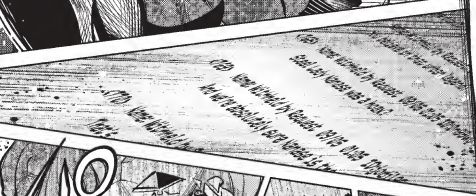
...IS DE-
STROYED
BY A LIE.

FICTION
REVERTS
TO
FICTION.

GH
GH

#



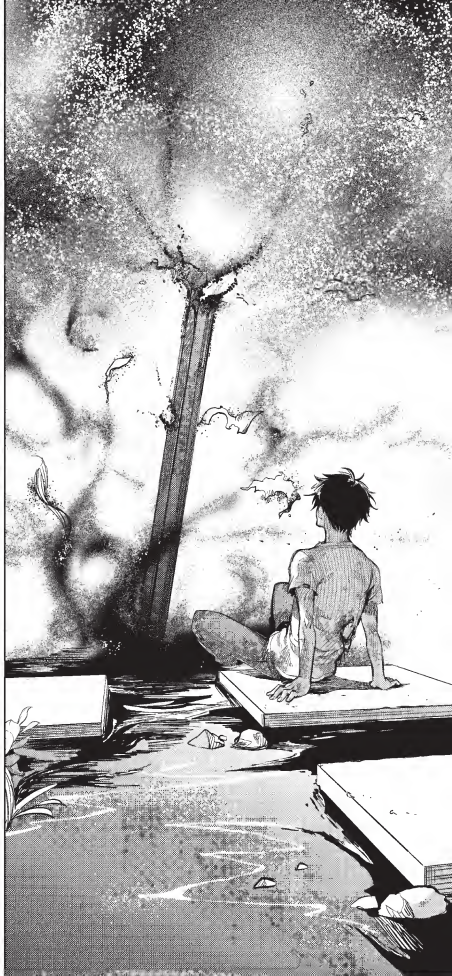


Withheld by Karin Nanase

Withheld by Re
There is no Steel Lad

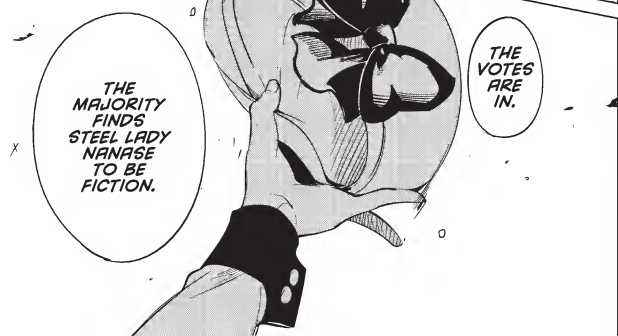
Name: Withheld by Req
No one knows the truth





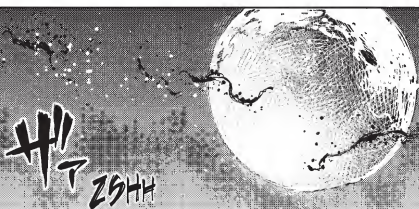
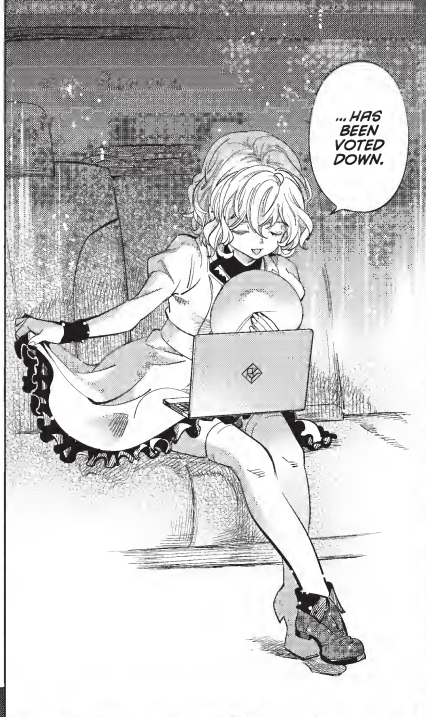


<721> Name: Withheld by Request 09/05 00:51
 That's how I got here. I thought it was going to be... <721> Name: Withheld by Request 09/05 00:56 ID: 09/05 10:07
 ...odd stuff, but it turned into a pretty interesting... If the rumors were spread on purpose...
 We just have to investigate... Name: Withheld by Request 09/05 00:56 ID: 09/05 10:07
 the webmaster. <726> Name: Withheld by Request 09/05 00:56 ID: 09/05 10:07
 <730> Name: Withheld by Request 09/05 00:56 ID: 09/05 10:07
 not here? <722> Name: Withheld by Request 09/05 00:56 ID: 09/05 10:07
 There's no such thing as Steel Lady Nanase. <687> Name: Withheld by Request 09/05 00:56 ID: 09/05 10:07
 Did we just witness the solving of a mystery? <718> Name: Withheld by Request 09/05 00:56 ID: 09/05 10:07
 So Steel Lady Nanase doesn't exist? <718> Name: Withheld by Request 09/05 00:56 ID: 09/05 10:07



THE
 MAJORITY
 FINDS
 STEEL LADY
 NANASE
 TO BE
 FICTION.

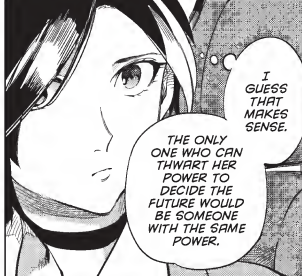
THE
 VOTES
 ARE
 IN.

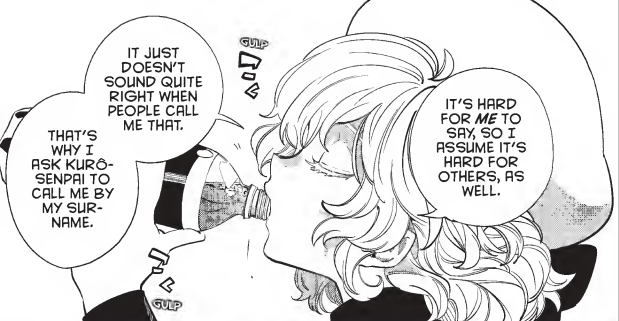




Rikka

Kurō, Kotoko-san,
you win this round.
Until next time.





THAT'S WHY I ASK KURŌ-SENPAI TO CALL ME BY MY SUR-NAME.

IT JUST DOESN'T SOUND QUITE RIGHT WHEN PEOPLE CALL ME THAT.

IT'S HARD FOR *ME* TO SAY, SO I ASSUME IT'S HARD FOR OTHERS, AS WELL.



OH? DID YOU DOUBT OUR RELATIONSHIP?

I TOLD YOU AS MUCH WHEN WE FIRST MET.



SO THAT'S WHY YOUR "BOY-FRIEND" DOESN'T CALL YOU BY YOUR GIVEN NAME.

OH.



SHE'S NOT THE TYPE TO LET A SETBACK LIKE THIS STOP HER.

I'M SURE SHE'LL TRY TO MAKE ANOTHER IMAGINARY MONSTER.

SHUT

110

4

3



ANY-
WAY...

RIKKA-SAN WROTE "THIS ROUND."



IT CAN
MAKE
YŌKAI,

GHOSTS
...

...AND
DEMONS.

ANY
NUMBER
OF POSSI-
BILITIES LIE
HIDDEN
WITHIN THE
HUMAN
IMAGINA-
TION.

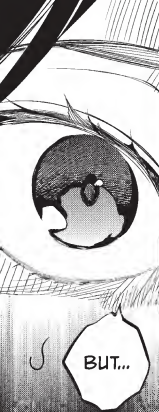
YOU DIDN'T
REALLY
EXPLAIN THIS
BEFORE,
BUT...

WHY IS
RIKKA-SAN
DOING
THIS?

KA-
CHAK

WE GIVE
LIFE TO
MONSTERS
WITHOUT
EVEN
REALIZING
IT.

AND IF
THAT'S TRUE,
ANYTHING IS
POSSIBLE.



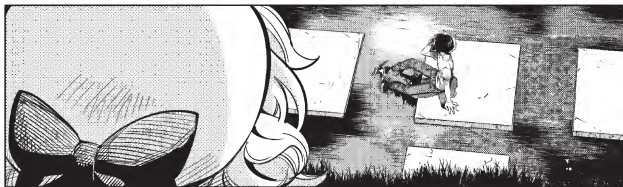
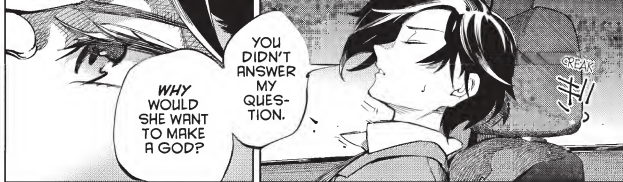
BUT...



THAT'S
...

ONE
COULD
EVEN
CREATE
A GOD.







I SUSPECT
YOU'VE
EXPENDED
FAR TOO MUCH
ENERGY, DYING
AND COMING
BACK TO LIFE
SO MANY
TIMES.

THANK
YOU
FOR ALL
YOUR
HARD
WORK.

とた
TROT

とた
TROT



YOU'RE
THE ONE
WHO NEEDS
NOURISH-
MENT.



YOU
MUST TAKE
NOURISH-
MENT IM-
MEDIATELY.

HERE,
EAT
THIS.

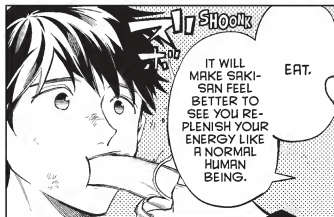
SHOVE

す
し
し



I KNOW
HOW MUCH
ENERGY
IT WOULD
HAVE TAKEN
TO PUT
THEM IN MY
REACH.

AFTER
CREATING
ALL THOSE
POSSI-
BILITIES,
ALL THOSE
FUTURES.



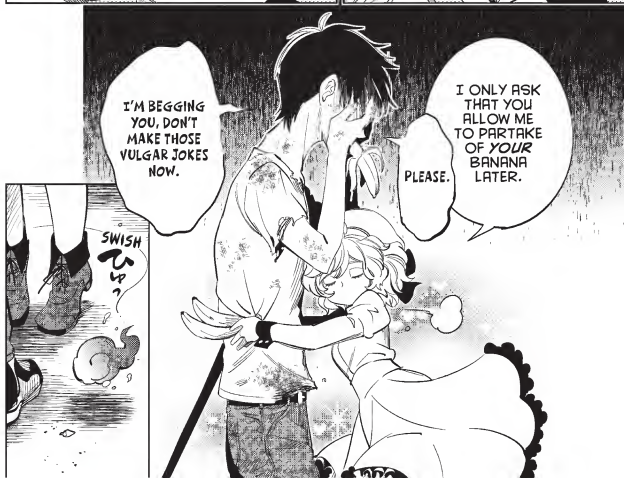
SHOONK

IT WILL
MAKE SAKI-
SAN FEEL
BETTER TO
SEE YOU RE-
PLENISH YOUR
ENERGY LIKE
A NORMAL
HUMAN
BEING.

EAT.



NOW,
NOW,
DON'T
SAY
THAT.

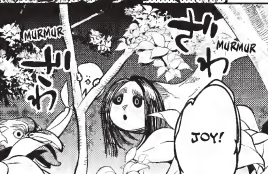


I'M BEGGING
YOU, DON'T
MAKE THOSE
VULGAR JOKES
NOW.

PLEASE.

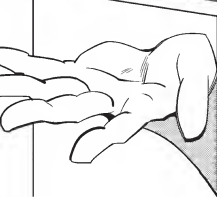
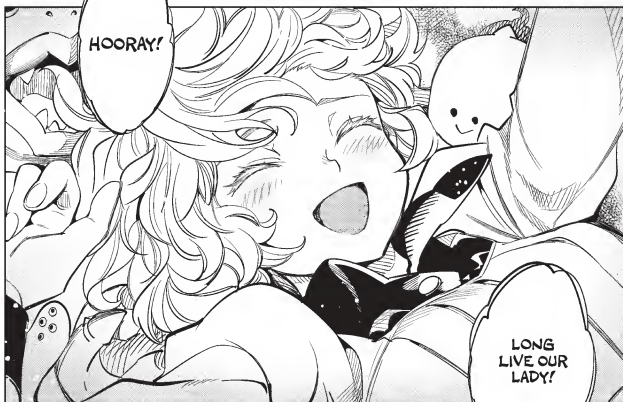
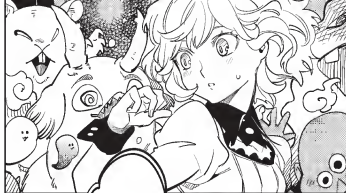
I ONLY ASK
THAT YOU
ALLOW ME
TO PARTAKE
OF *YOUR*
BANANA
LATER.

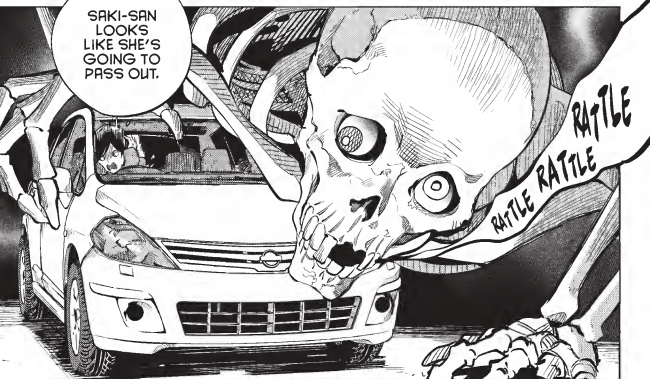
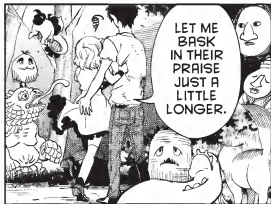
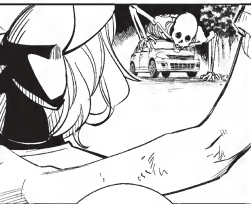
SWISH

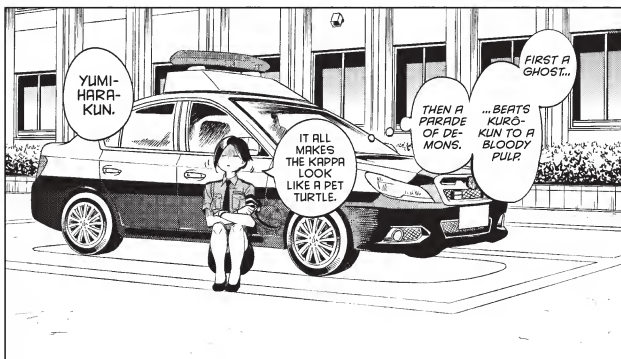
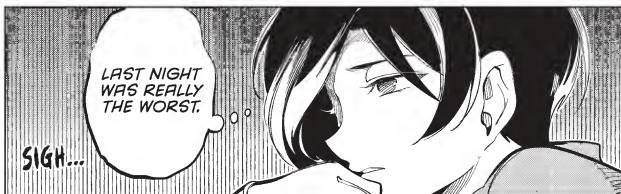


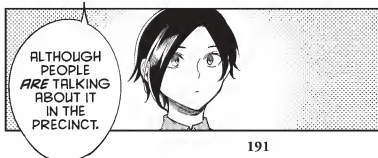
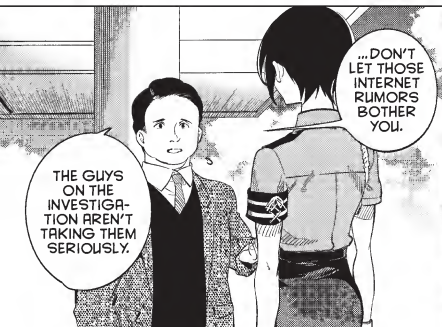


HOORAY
FOR OUR
LADY!

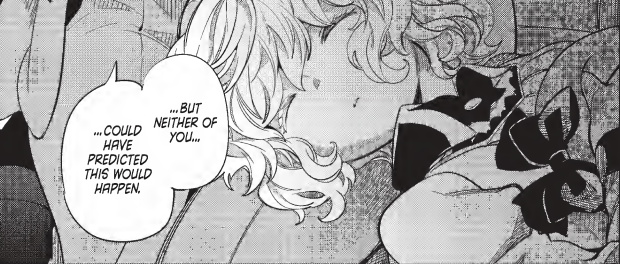






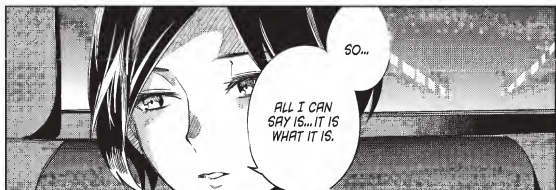






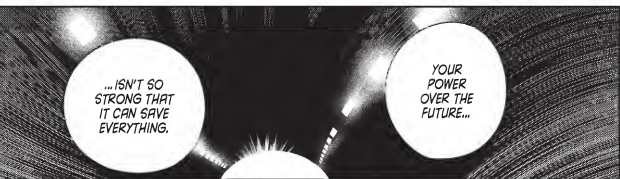
...COULD
HAVE
PREDICTED
THIS WOULD
HAPPEN.

...BUT
NEITHER OF
YOU...



SO...

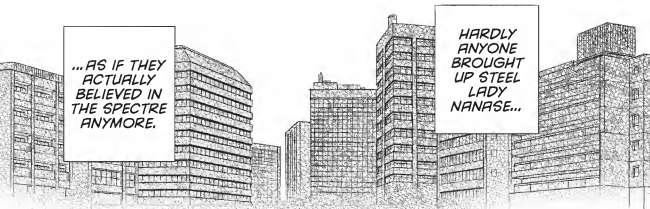
ALL I CAN
SAY IS...IT IS
WHAT IT IS.



...ISN'T SO
STRONG THAT
IT CAN SAVE
EVERYTHING.

YOUR
POWER
OVER THE
FUTURE...

SEPTEMBER 5,
SUNDAY



...AS IF THEY
ACTUALLY
BELIEVED IN
THE SPECTRE
ANYMORE.

HARDLY
ANYONE
BROUGHT
UP STEEL
LADY
NANASE...

RESULTS: ABOUT 880,000

STEEL LADY NANASE WIKI

STEEL LADY NANASE - KIKIPEDIA

STEEL LADY NANASE: THE URBAN LEGEND

STEEL LADY NANASE ARCHIVE

CLICK



...OF
WHETHER
OR NOT
KARIN
NANASE
SURVIVED.

TKK-
TAK



Fug
search jap

EVERY-
ONE'S
INTEREST
TURNED TO
SOLVING
THE
RIDDLE...

STEEL LADY NANASE WIKI

SEARCH

PAGE NOT FOUND

404 Error
Not Found

AFTER HER
DEFEAT,
RIKKA-SAN
DELETED
THE WIKI.

STEEL LADY NANASE WIKI WIKI
THIS WIKI WAS MADE TO COLLECT AND INVESTIGATE ALL THE
COMMENTS POSTED TO THE STEEL LADY NANASE WIKI ON
SEPTEMBER 4.

-DID KARIN NANA

-WHAT IS THE
NANASE WIKI

-POSTED
SCREEN

THE FICTITIOUS
TALE THAT KARIN
NANASE HAD LIVED
AND THE BODY
BELONGED TO
SOMEONE ELSE.

THOSE WHO
WITNESSED
THE SERIES OF
EVENTS STARTED
TALKING
ABOUT A
DIFFERENT
URBAN LEGEND—

STEEL LADY NANASE ARCHIVE

STEEL LADY NANASE WIKI WIKI

STEEL LADY NANASE WIKI WIKI

STEEL LADY NANASE INCIDENT
EXPLORATION

I THINK
MOST PEOPLE
WOULD ASSUME
IT WAS ALL
SOMETHING
THAT
HAPPENED
ON TV OR IN
THE PAPERS—
NOTHING
MORE THAN
A STORY.

ALTHOUGH
EVERYONE
ACCEPTED
THE STORY,
IT REMAINS
A SEPARATE
REALITY
FROM OUR
OWN.

IT WAS SO
MELODRAMATIC
THAT NO ONE
WAS EAGER
TO VOICE THE
THEORY IN THE
REAL WORLD.

DID KARIN NANASE DO

WHAT IS THE STEEL L
ANASE WIKI?

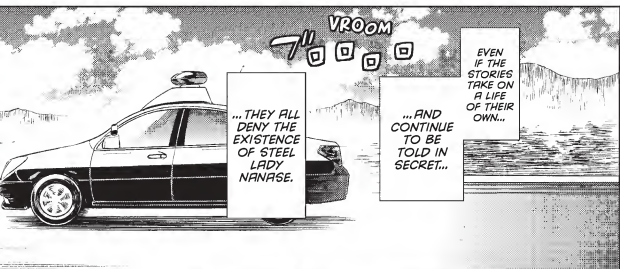


THE DRAMA
WAS
RESOLVED
WITHIN THE
CONFINES
OF THE
INTERNET.

LOOKING
FOR A
SEQUEL IN
REALITY...

...MAY
TARNISH
THE STORY.

AND IN
THAT CASE,
I DOUBT
ANYONE
WILL TRY
CONTACTING
ANYONE
INVOLVED WITH
KARIN NANASE
IN REAL LIFE.

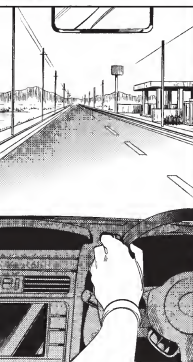


VROOM

...THEY ALL
DENY THE
EXISTENCE
OF STEEL
LADY
NANASE.

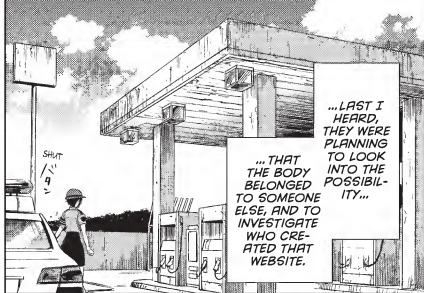
...AND
CONTINUE
TO BE
TOLD IN
SECRET...

EVEN
IF THE
STORIES
TAKE ON
A LIFE
OF THEIR
OWN...



...I
DEFINITELY
DO NOT
WANT TO
GET ON HER
BAD SIDE.

AND SHE
PROBABLY
PLANNED IT
THAT WAY.

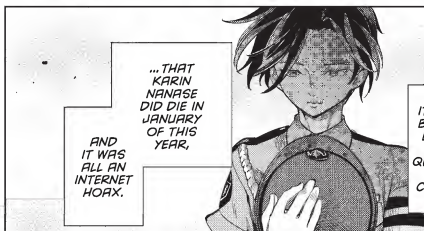


...LAST I
HEARD,
THEY WERE
PLANNING
TO LOOK
INTO THE
POSSIBIL-
ITY...

... THAT
THE BODY
BELONGED
TO SOMEONE
ELSE, AND TO
INVESTIGATE
WHO CRE-
ATED THAT
WEBSITE.



AS FOR
THE POLICE
...



... THAT
KARIN
NANASE
DID DIE IN
JANUARY
OF THIS
YEAR,

AND
IT WAS
ALL AN
INTERNET
HOAX.

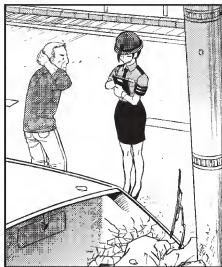
IT WON'T
BE LONG
BEFORE
HEAD-
QUARTERS
CON-
CLUDES...

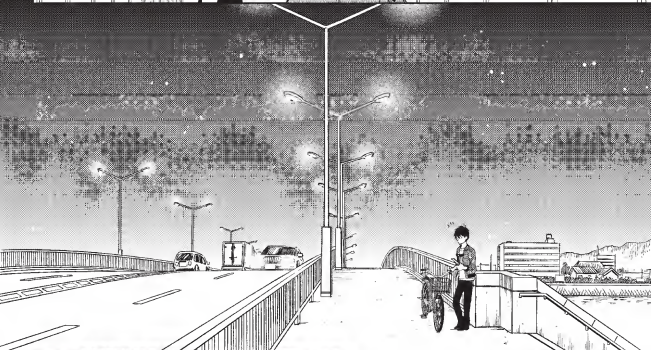
BUT
THEY'LL
NEVER
PROVE
THAT THE
BODY WAS
SOMEONE
ELSE.

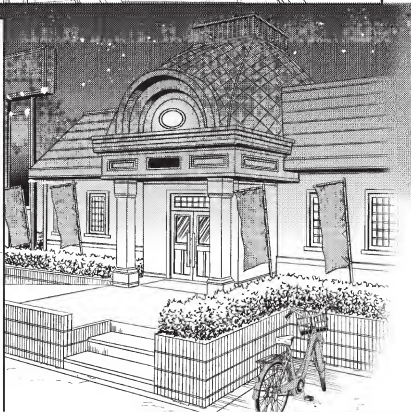


WE'LL NEVER
KNOW ABOUT
KARIN NANASE,
OR WHAT
HAPPENED
BETWEEN
HER AND HER
FAMILY.

TERADA-SAN'S
MURDERER
HAS BEEN
ERASED
FROM
EXISTENCE.









IWANAGA-SAN
WOULDN'T
GIVE ME A
STRAIGHT
ANSWER.

WHAT
IS SHE
AFTER?

YES.



WELL...

*I'VE
RESIGNED
MYSELF
TO MY
CONDI-
TION,
AND MY
POWER.*



FOR NOW,
I SEEM TO
BE GROWING
AND AGING
LIKE A NORMAL
PERSON.

BUT I'M
HOPEFUL
THAT WHEN
I LIVE OUT
A NORMAL
HUMAN
LIFESPAN,
MAYBE I'LL
ACTUALLY
DIE AFTER
ALL.

I MAY NOT
BE ABLE TO
DIE IN AN
ACCIDENT
OR FROM
AN INJURY,



SO
I THINK
I CAN
MANAGE...

...TO
LIVE A
NORMAL
LIFE.

AND MOST
EVERYDAY
SITUATIONS
DON'T TURN
INTO A LIFE-
OR-DEATH
SORT OF
DEAL.

I CAN'T
USE MY
POWER
OVER THE
FUTURE
UNLESS
I DIE
ANYWAY.



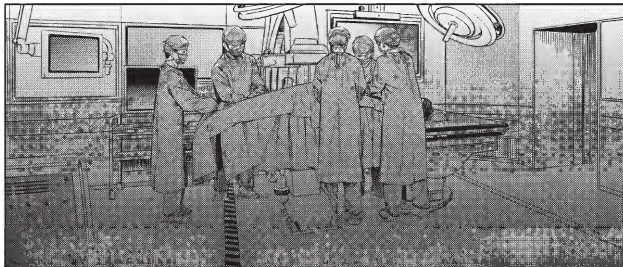
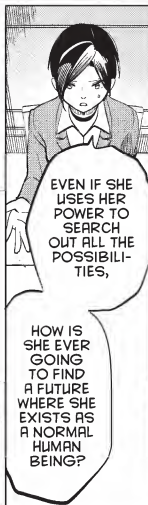
BUT
RIKKA-SAN
DOESN'T
FEEL THAT
WAY.

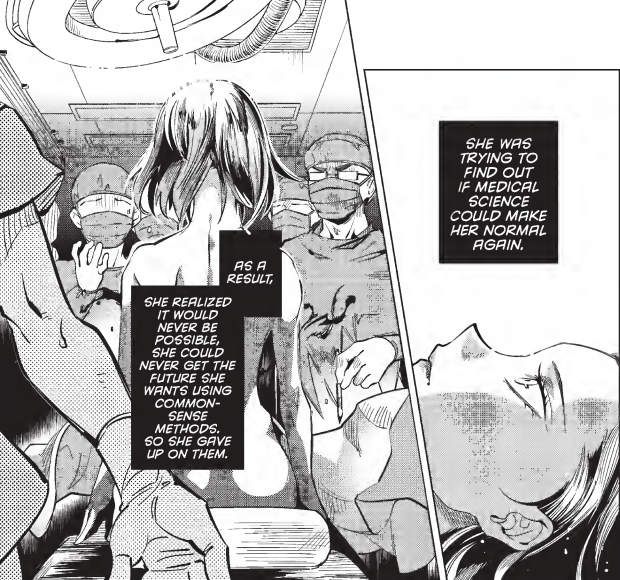
NORMAL...
NORMAL.



...IN AN
ATTEMPT TO
GO BACK
TO BEING
A NORMAL
HUMAN.

SHE IS
ACTIVELY
USING HER
POWER...





AS A
RESULT,

SHE REALIZED
IT WOULD
NEVER BE
POSSIBLE,
SHE COULD
NEVER GET THE
FUTURE SHE
WANTS USING
COMMON-
SENSE
METHODS.
SO SHE GAVE
UP ON THEM.

SHE WAS
TRYING TO
FIND OUT
IF MEDICAL
SCIENCE
COULD MAKE
HER NORMAL
AGAIN.

AND THEN
WHAT?

...COULD
EVEN
CREATE
A GOD.

THE HUMAN
IMAGINATION...



A
MONSTER
OF THE
IMAGINA-
TION...

A
BEING
WITH
GODLIKE
POWER.

IS THAT
WHAT SHE
WANTS?



RIKKA-
SAN WANTS
TO CREATE
SOME-
THING...

...WITH THE
POWER TO
MAKE HER
NORMAL
AGAIN.



I'M
AFRAID
SO.

RIKKA-SAN
WILL STOP
AT NOTHING
TO GET WHAT
SHE WANTS.



SHE WANTS
TO BE NORMAL,
SO SHE'S
DOING THE
MOST ABNOR-
MAL THING
POSSIBLE.

I DON'T
KNOW
WHAT SHE'S
THINKING.



I CAN'T
SHAKE THE
THOUGHT...



SHE WAS
ALWAYS A
MONSTER...

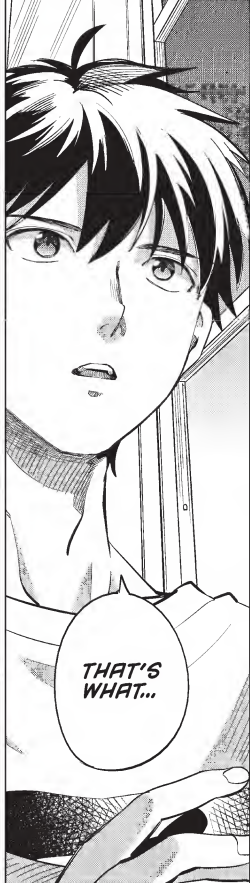
...EVEN
BEFORE
SHE ATE
THE YŌKAI
MEAT.

...THAT
IN HER
HEART,





... SHE GAVE
UP HER
RIGHT EYE
AND LEFT
LEG TO
PROTECT.



THAT'S
WHAT...



AND
YOU'RE
RIGHT
THERE TO
BACK
HER UP.



SHE'S
THE TYPE
TO REALLY
LET THAT
BOTHER
HER.

EVEN
IF SHE
WOULD,
YOU CAN'T
KEEP MY
NUMBER.

EVEN IF
THAT'S NOT
REALLY YOUR
STYLE.

DID YOU
DELETE MY
NUMBER
FROM YOUR
PHONE?

YEAH,
BUT...

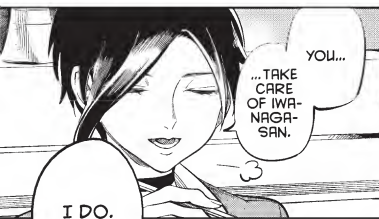
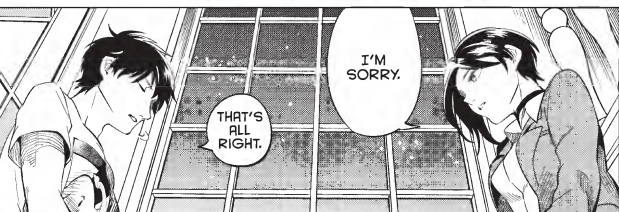
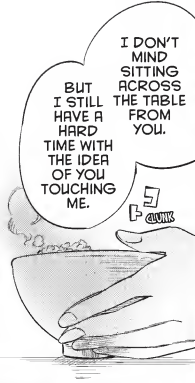
YES.

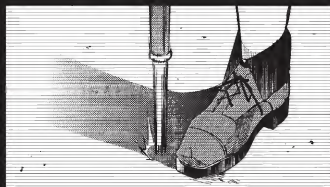
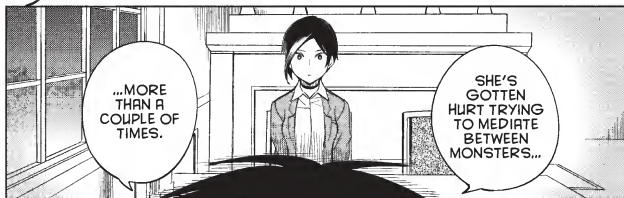
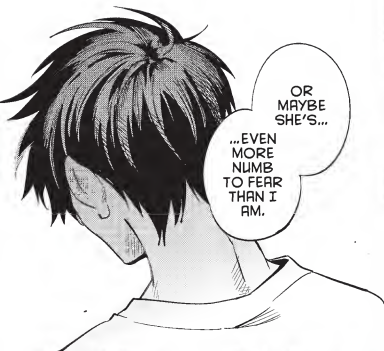
SHE'D
NEVER STOP
BUGGING
ME IF I
DIDN'T.

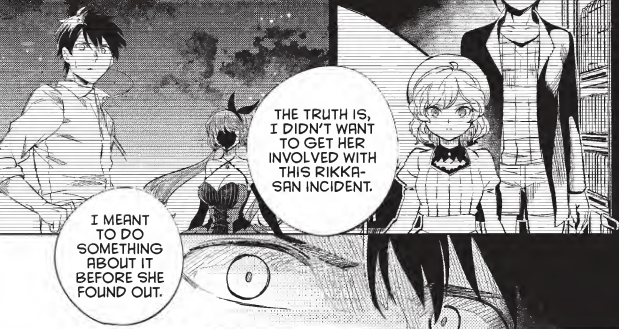


SAKI-
SAN.

YOU
KNOW WE
COULD
NEVER
MAKE IT
WORK.





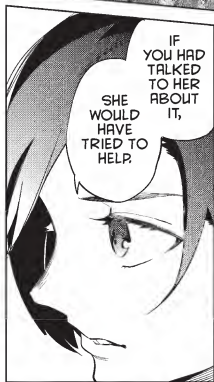




I'VE
SEEN
WHAT
RIKKA-
SAN IS
CAPABLE
OF.

IF
IWANAGA-
SAN IS IN
HER WAY...

I
DIDN'T
THINK
OF
THAT.



IF
YOU HAD
TALKED
TO HER
ABOUT
IT,
SHE
WOULD
HAVE
TRIED TO
HELP.



...WITHOUT
A WORD TO
IWANAGA-
SAN?

IS THAT
WHY YOU
RAN OFF
TO FIND
RIKKA-
SAN...



...I
WON'T LET
IWANAGA
DIE.



BECAUSE
SHE
DESERVES
TO BE
HAPPY.



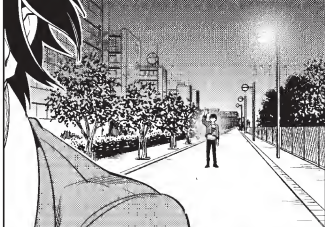
NOW,

I CAN
FINALLY
MOVE
ON.



I'LL
PROBABLY
NEVER
SEE HIM
AGAIN.

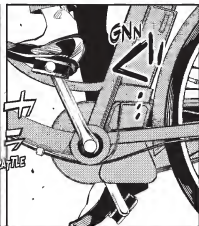


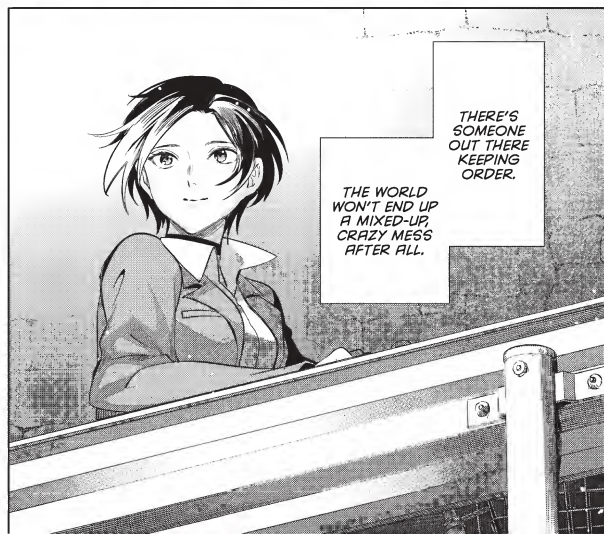


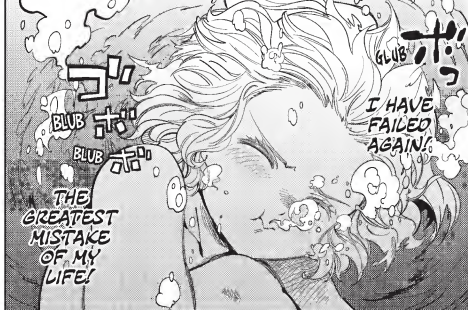
I STILL
GET
SCARED
AT
NIGHT.



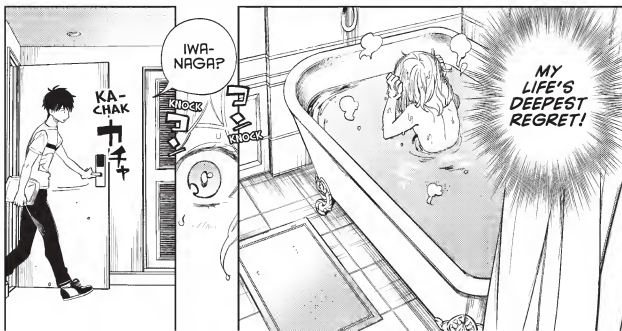
BUT...

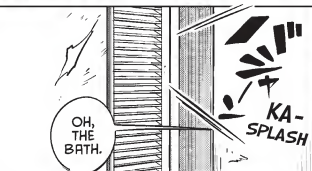




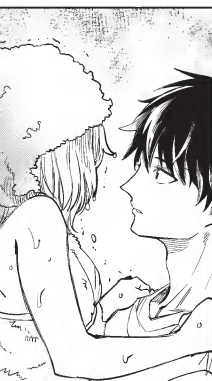
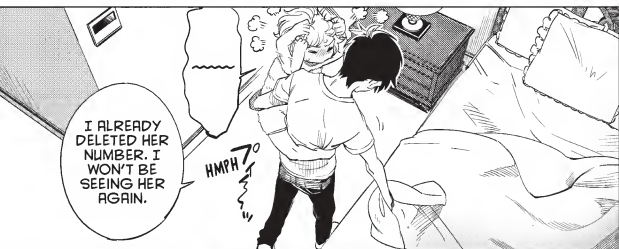


SEP-
TEMBER 6,
MON-
DAY

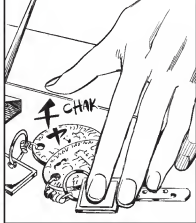


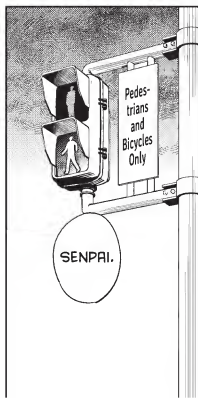














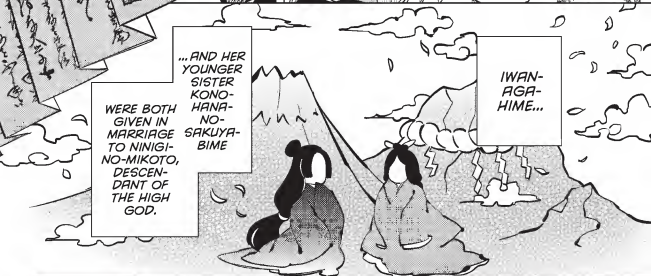


IF YOU
KNOW
ABOUT
KUEBIKO,
THEN
YOU KNOW
ABOUT
IWANAGA-
HIME, TOO,
RIGHT?



IT *IS*
HOMO-
PHONOUS
WITH MY
SURNAME.

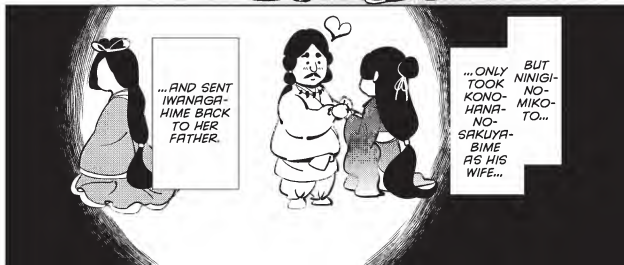
HOW
COULD
I *NOT*
KNOW
IT?



WERE BOTH
GIVEN IN
MARRIAGE
TO NINIGI-
NO-MIKOTO,
DESCEN-
DANT OF
THE HIGH
GOD.

...AND HER
YOUNGER
SISTER
KONO-
HANA-
NO-
SAKUYA-
BIME

IWANAGA-
HIME...



...AND SENT
IWANAGA-
HIME BACK
TO HER
FATHER.

...ONLY
TOOK
KONO-
HANA-
NO-
SAKUYA-
BIME
AS HIS
WIFE... BUT
NINIGI-
NO-
MIKO-
TO...



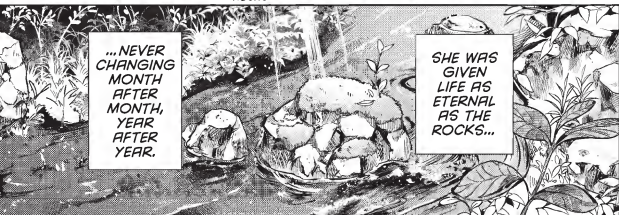
AS THE
IWA* IN
HER NAME
SUGGESTED,

*ROCKS

I GAVE BOTH
SISTERS TO YOU
FOR A REASON!



FATHER:
ÔYAMATSUMI



...NEVER
CHANGING
MONTH
AFTER
MONTH,
YEAR
AFTER
YEAR.

SHE WAS
GIVEN
LIFE AS
ETERNAL
AS THE
ROCKS...



THAT
SCATTERED
LIKE THE
FLOWERS
ON THE
TREES.

...WERE
GRANTED
ONLY
SHORT
LIVES,

BUT
BECAUSE HE
REFUSED
TO TAKE
HER AS
HIS WIFE,
NINIGI-
NO-
MIKOTO
AND HIS
PROGENY...



THAT
IS HOW
HUMANS
BECAME
MORTAL.



I'M
IMMORTAL.
I DON'T
BELONG...

...WITH
KONOHANA-
NO-SAKUYA-
BIME.



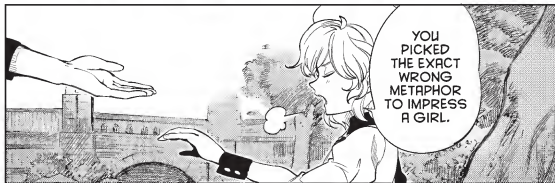
THEN YOU
GET IT,
RIGHT?



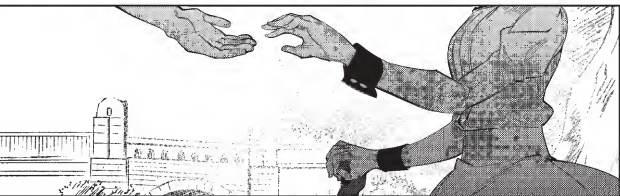
I NEED
IWANAGA-
HIME.

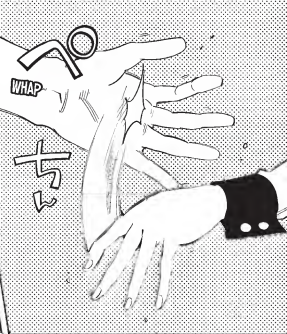


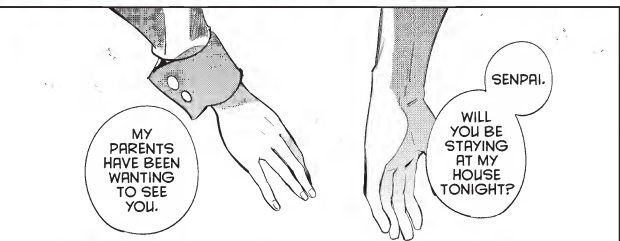
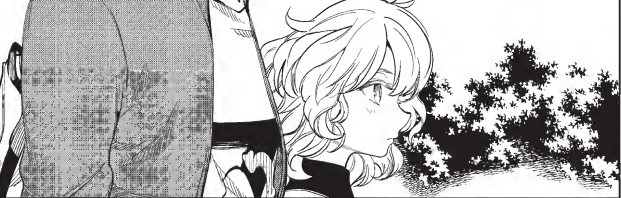
YOU THINK YOU'RE SO CLEVER, DON'T YOU?







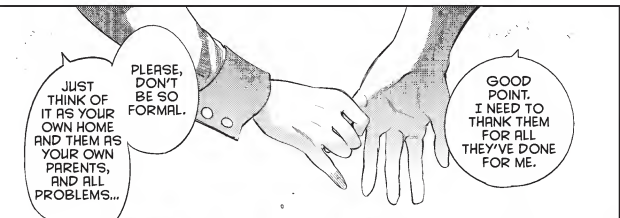




MY
PARENTS
HAVE BEEN
WANTING
TO SEE
YOU.

SENPAI.

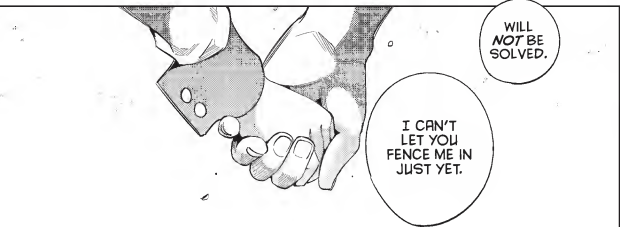
WILL
YOU BE
STAYING
AT MY
HOUSE
TONIGHT?



JUST
THINK OF
IT AS YOUR
OWN HOME
AND THEM AS
YOUR OWN
PARENTS,
AND ALL
PROBLEMS...

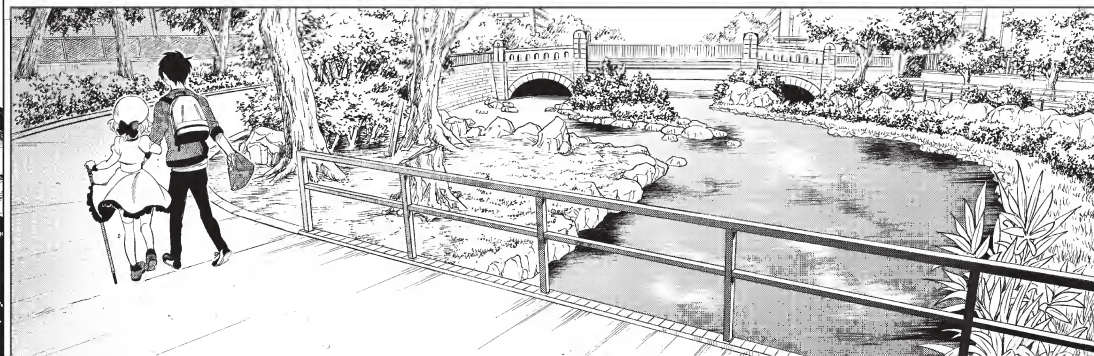
PLEASE,
DON'T
BE SO
FORMAL.

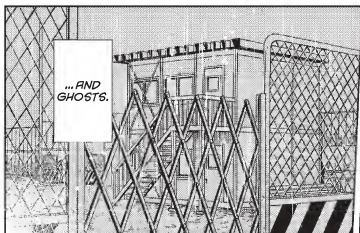
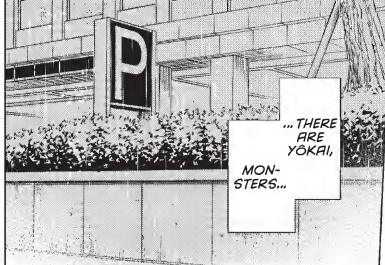
GOOD
POINT.
I NEED TO
THANK THEM
FOR ALL
THEY'VE DONE
FOR ME.



WILL
NOT BE
SOLVED.

I CAN'T
LET YOU
FENCE ME IN
JUST YET.



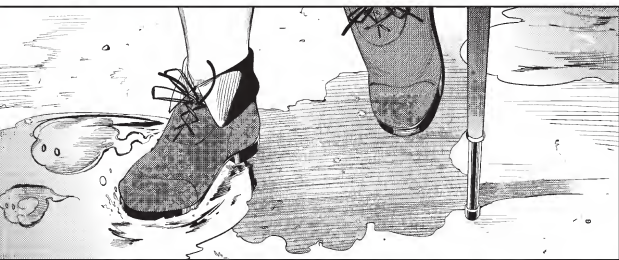


IN THIS
WORLD...

SHH

4
7

7





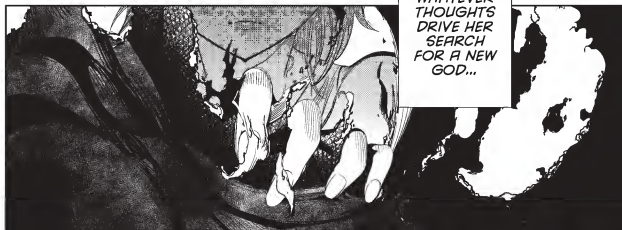
BUT
THERE'S
NO NEED
TO FEAR.



BECAUSE
THERE IS
ORDER
IN ALL
THINGS.



WHATEVER
METHODS
RIKKA-
SAN MAY
ATTEMPT,



WHATEVER
THOUGHTS
DRIVE HER
SEARCH
FOR A NEW
GOD...



...I
SWEAR
I'LL
DEFEND
THAT
ORDER.



...A
FICTION
THAT
TRAN-
SCENDS
TRUTH.

IF
NECESSARY,
I WILL
INVENT A
RATIONAL
FICTION...



FROM
THAT
SPACE
BETWEEN
TRUTH AND
LIES, I WILL
DEFEND
THIS
WORLD.



IN/SPECTRE

feelings were more complicated, as in, "This meets all the requirements of a mystery, but I can't really see it as a mystery."

It seems that I find that mystery-style of fun in stories where the characters find the logic in a situation, put everything in its proper place, and then uncover the truth or try to restore order.

And as for this story, Kotoko Iwanaga states definitively that she is the one who keeps order. The act of taking a situation that has been disrupted by the unreasonable or the bizarre, and putting it back in order, even by use of fiction, is a big part of what makes a story an authentic mystery...I think.

The Steel Lady Nanase case has been solved, but the story continues. My time as the do-nothing original author has come to an end, alas. As I go on, I think, "This wouldn't be happening if Katase-sensei would charge into the editorial department with a three-section staff demanding, 'I can't stand turning such a wordy story into pictures any longer!'" but if that had happened, I would probably be the first one to be hit with that three-section staff, so I think I will humbly continue work on this story while changing some things here and there.

So I hope you will read the next volume.

Kyo Shirodaira

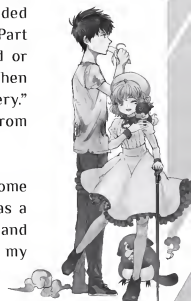
I am the author, Kyo Shirodaira, and this is volume six. It's really thick compared to previous volumes. Don't worry; you're not seeing things.

After all this time, the Steel Lady Nanase case is resolved. Thank you all for reading, and thank you, Chashiba Katase-sensei, for your hard work. I mean, I've done nothing on any of this, so that's all I can say.

As the author of the original novel, I had big concerns before the manga started about whether or not this story, with its heaps of exposition, topped with piles of fictional explanations, would even work as a manga, but then, after the series started, my bigger concern was that I needed to prepare myself so that when I heard people say, "The manga is *way* better than the book," I would be able to respond in a mature manner, so you never know how things will turn out. Although I suspect part of the problem is my own habit of doing something to stir up my anxiety no matter how things go.

Now as for the story, the case is solved like in a real mystery story, but I think opinions are going to be divided about whether or not it really qualifies as a mystery. Part of it will be whether you define "mystery" in broad or narrow terms, and then it gets even more difficult when you try to measure it on the scale of "authentic mystery." It may also depend on what you as readers expect from your mystery stories.

Even when I personally have come into contact with some stories, my opinion was, "This doesn't really count as a mystery, but it moved me like a mystery story does, and serious mystery fans should like it," but with others, my



BONUS

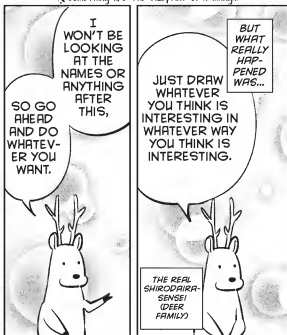
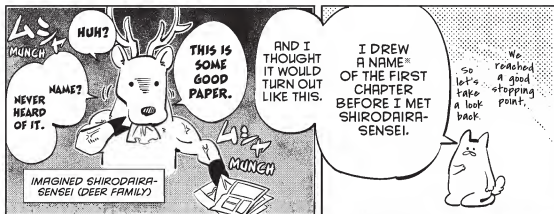


AFTERWORD

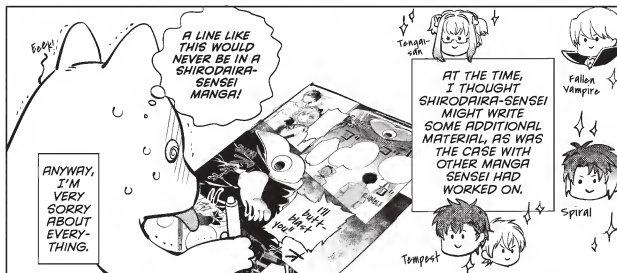
THANK YOU
VERY MUCH TO
THE READERS,
SHIRODAIRA-
SENSEI, AND
EVERYONE
INVOLVED.

THE STEEL
LADY NANASE
CASE IS
SOLVED
IN THIS
VOLUME!

HELLO,
AND PLEASED
TO MEET YOU.
I AM THE
MANGA ARTIST,
CHASHIBA
KATASE.

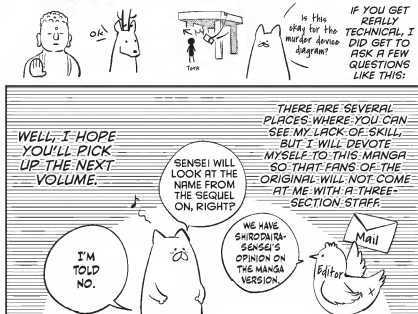


*Something like the blueprint of a manga



STAFF

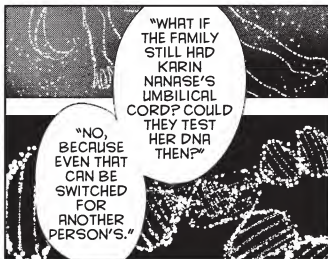
otôamu
Tonpu
Asai
Kuro Shima
EDITORS
O-kawa
T-da (honorifics excluded)



IN/SPECTRE



TRANSLATION NOTES



Karin Nanase's umbilical cord, page 23

When a baby is born in Japan, it is customary to keep part of his or her umbilical cord as a memento. As the thing that used to literally connect the child to his or her mother, it now symbolizes the bond between them. If Karin Nanase's parents followed this custom and were keeping the umbilical cord somewhere, it could be used for DNA testing, assuming it hadn't been switched.

Astral body, page 47

Japanese term used here is *ikiryō*, which roughly translates to "spirit of the living." In Japanese folklore, there is a belief that if a living person feels strongly enough about something or someone, usually in a negative way, their spirit will leave their body to do something about those feelings—for example, curse a love rival, or seek revenge against the one who brought about her untimely demise.



Nanase Family Tomb, page 49

In Japan, the bodies of the deceased are usually cremated, and their ashes are placed in urns. For this reason, it is not uncommon for a family to share a tombstone, with a chamber underneath for housing the urns.

Kojiki, page 226

The *Kojiki*, or "Records of Ancient Matters," is the oldest written record of Japan. It contains many stories from Japanese mythology, including the creation myth, and the story of Iwanaga-hime.



Scattered like the flowers on the trees, page 229

The significance of this metaphor is that the name of the princess that was accepted as a wife, Konohana-no-Sakuya-hime, means roughly "princess blossoming brilliantly like the flowers on the trees." Although she was very beautiful, her life was as fleeting as the flowers, that bloom for a season and are scattered by the wind. Ōyamatsumi's hope in giving both sisters to Ninigi-no-Mikoto is that his posterity would be both as beautiful as the flowers and as long-lived as the rocks. It may also be worth noting that while Kotoko shares her name with Iwanaga-hime, Saki and Rikka both have names more closely related to flowers. Rikka's name is even more fleeting, as it can mean "six flowers" or "snowflake."



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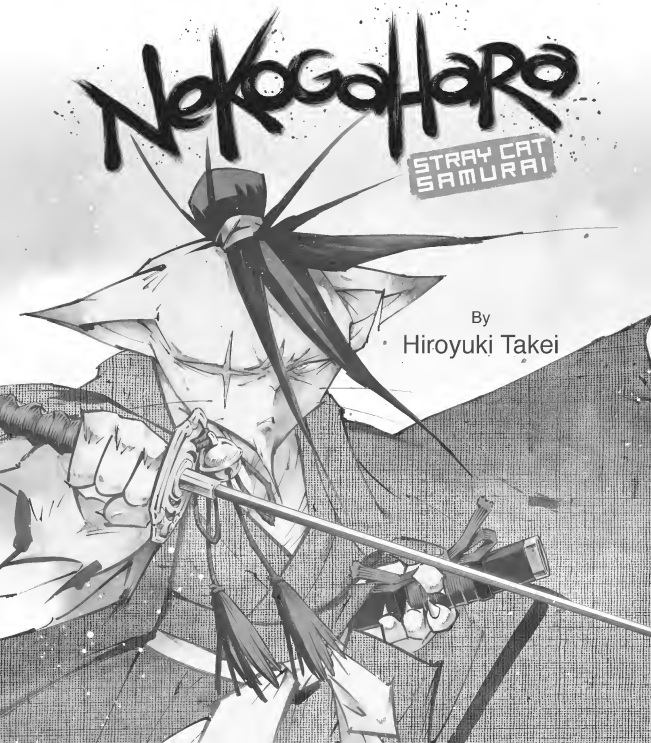
*New action series from Hiroyuki Takei, creator of
the classic shonen franchise Shaman King!*

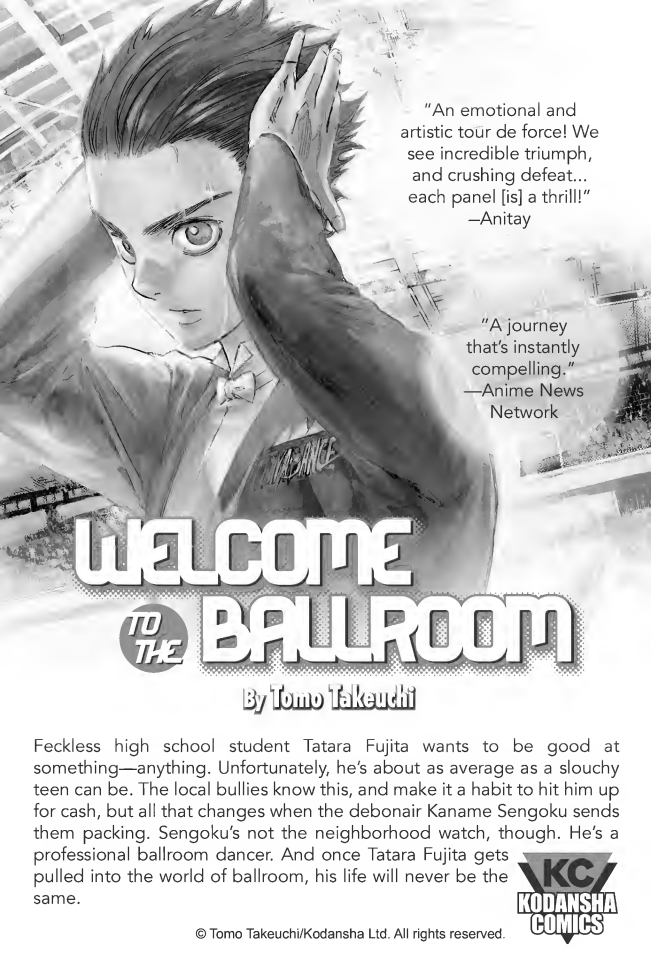
In medieval Japan, a bell hanging on the collar is a sign that a cat has a master. Norachiyo's bell hangs from his katana sheath, but he is nonetheless a stray — a ronin. This one-eyed cat samurai travels across a dishonest world, cutting through pretense and deception with his blade.

NekoGatHarō

STRAY CAT
SAMURAI

By
Hiroyuki Takei





"An emotional and artistic tour de force! We see incredible triumph, and crushing defeat... each panel [is] a thrill!"
—Anitay

"A journey that's instantly compelling."
—Anime News Network

WELCOME TO THE BALLROOM

By Tomo Takeuchi

Feckless high school student Tatara Fujita wants to be good at something—anything. Unfortunately, he's about as average as a slouchy teen can be. The local bullies know this, and make it a habit to hit him up for cash, but all that changes when the debonair Kaname Sengoku sends them packing. Sengoku's not the neighborhood watch, though. He's a professional ballroom dancer. And once Tatara Fujita gets pulled into the world of ballroom, his life will never be the same.





The Black Museum ^{The} Ghost and the Lady

By Kazuhiro Fujita

Deep in Scotland Yard in London sits an evidence room dedicated to the greatest mysteries of British history. In this “Black Museum” sits a misshapen hunk of lead—two bullets fused together—the key to a wartime encounter between Florence Nightingale, the mother of modern nursing, and a supernatural Man in Grey. This story is unknown to most scholars of history, but a special guest of the museum will tell the tale of *The Ghost and the Lady*...

Praise for Kazuhiro Fujita’s *Ushio and Tora*

“A charming revival that combines a classic look with modern depth and pacing... **Essential viewing both for curmudgeons and new fans alike.**” — Anime News Network

“**GREAT!** The first episode of *Ushio and Tora* captures the essence of '90s anime.” — IGN

H A P P I N E S S

——ハピネス——

By Shuzo Oshimi

From the creator of *The Flowers of Evil*

Nothing interesting is happening in Makoto Ozaki's first year of high school. His life is a series of quiet humiliations: low-grade bullies, unreliable friends, and the constant frustration of his adolescent lust. But one night, a pale, thin girl knocks him to the ground in an alley and offers him a choice.

Now everything is different. Daylight is searingly bright. Food tastes awful. And worse than anything is the terrible, consuming thirst...

Praise for Shuzo Oshimi's *The Flowers of Evil*

"A shockingly readable story that vividly—one might even say queasily—evokes the fear and confusion of discovering one's own sexuality. Recommended." —The Manga Critic

"A page-turning tale of sordid middle school blackmail." —Otaku USA Magazine

"A stunning new horror manga." —Third Eye Comics



KC
KODANSHA
COMICS

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In/Spectre 6

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